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# **ESSAYS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISE**

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**VOLUME I**

**arts and festivals  
recreation and leisure  
the social and welfare services  
themes old and new**

*edited by* **ELLIS HILLMAN**

ESSAYS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
ENTERPRISE

VOLUME ONE

Dedicated to Arthur and Edith Cooper

"The best argument to prove that a  
thing may be done, is actually to do it."

Thomas Fuller (1658)

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*Edited by*  
ELLIS HILLMAN

VOLUME ONE

*Arts and Festivals*  
*Recreation and Leisure*  
*The Social and Welfare Services*  
*General Themes*

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## FOREWORD

W. G. FISKE, C.B.E.

*Leader of the Greater London Council*

THE essays on Local Government in this volume will prove useful in bringing home to the public at large the scope and variety of the duties and responsibilities of Local Government. The public are still largely ignorant of what a local authority does for the people in its area and what it has powers to do. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in the field of cultural and recreational activities which, as we move into a society that can expect to enjoy more leisure, can become of paramount importance, and you will read in here of many experiments—successful and unsuccessful—that have been made in this field. The important thing is that experiments should be made and the public catered for as widely as possible. Some authorities are interested in recreation and sport, others in the more cultural activities, but what local authorities must learn to do in the coming years is to provide for the whole interests of the population in their area, if necessary by pooling arrangements with their neighbours, so that it is possible for any given area to enjoy live theatre, music and all the sporting activities, to mention only some.

All of this will cost money that the local authorities now have the legal right to spend within certain limits, but which as far as I know have not been reached by any local authority in this country. It will require courage on the part of members of councils, who may meet a Philistine reaction or a resistance to spending the money of the ratepayers, even though it will be the ratepayers who will enjoy the facilities provided.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE Editor would like to express his gratitude to those who have given freely of their advice and encouragement to this project. Particular thanks are due to the contributors who had to comply with a tight schedule, often at great inconvenience.

Special thanks are due to Ann Adams and Barbara Hosking, for their valuable assistance in suggestions regarding contributors on specialised topics; also to Dr. Annie Hillman, for her constructive criticism and help with the difficult task of proof-reading.

The Editor would like to take this opportunity to place on record his appreciation of the loyal support he has received from Hackney Central Labour Party.

ELLIS HILLMAN

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## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

THIS volume arose as a result of informal discussions which took place in the spring of this year. Local elections were taking place in many parts of the country at that time. This year they had a special significance in that many were widely regarded as a pointer to the results of the General Election. In Greater London too, with the upheaval of local government consequent upon the passage of the 1963 London Government Act, the newly elected authorities were faced with a whole range of new problems. The time had surely come for a re-appraisal and a re-stating of the purposes of local government, and it was upon the shoulders of the Labour Movement that this responsibility weighed most heavily.

The Labour Movement has behind it a long record of public service, of service to local authorities—a record going back to the last century. No guidance has, however, been given to the movement in the working out of bold and imaginative policies to meet the challenge of the twentieth century, the century of scientific, technological and cultural revolution.

These essays are designed to open up a discussion of the *purposes* of local government, by the exchange of experiences, by a wide-ranging survey of the extent to which local authorities can exercise their functions as moulders of community life and initiators of public enterprise.

The preparation of this volume, the first of a series, has been both valuable and rewarding experience. As the contributions flowed in from far and wide, the shape of this co-operative enterprise in writing began to emerge.

It became evident at an early stage that the first volume would cover a very wide field indeed. It was, therefore, decided that a volume of this description could not



be expected to deal with every possible aspect of local government enterprise.

This volume is concerned with the range and diversity of municipal, local government and community enterprise in the field of Arts and Festivals, Recreation and Leisure and the Social and Welfare Services. It has been divided into three parts. Part I; The Arts and Festivals, Recreation and Leisure, with a sub-section, Especially for Children. Part II; The Social and Welfare Services and Part III; General Themes.

Some overlapping is, of course, unavoidable, even inevitable in an enterprise of this description—as the subject matter cannot always be rigidly confined to one aspect of local enterprise.

### *The Contributors*

The contributors were chosen for their knowledge, keen interest and enthusiasm for their subjects. The bureaucratic approach is excluded from this volume of essays, which does not concern itself with the mechanics and machinery of local government—except perhaps in passing. The accent and emphasis is on enterprise in all its fields, and with all its potentials. Even a brief glance at the pages of this work will convince the reader of the importance of the subject matter. The Arts and Festivals, Recreation and Leisure, the Social and Welfare Services and the broader themes of local government endeavour are all presented in a readable and usable form.

It is not only the “specialist” who will benefit from the study of these essays. The volume provides too, a service not only to the world of local authorities—often unfortunately, a rather introverted world—but to the informed public.

It has been suggested to the contributors that the purpose of assembling these essays and studies is to stimulate other local authorities to emulate the achievements and example of those who are leading the field in new ventures and enterprise, to encourage a type of “municipal stakhanovism.” If this indeed is the effect of this collection of essays, the contributors will not complain. This purpose is, in fact, well served by the example set by local authorities throughout the length and breadth of the country.

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Some of the essays describe what has been achieved, others describe what is fundamentally lacking in the direction of enterprise, whilst still others survey the general scene from a particular angle, e.g. the trade union angle, or the co-operators' standpoint.

### *A Continuing Theme*

This volume is first of a series which will cover the fundamental problems of new cities and new towns, and the future of the educational system. It is all too obvious that many important projects and examples of municipal enterprise have been left out; most of the major centres in England and Scotland will have to await further volumes. A line had to be drawn at some point and it may be that the net has been spread if anything too widely to begin with.

### *The Background*

As long ago as 1953, Professor Robson in *Political Quarterly* drew attention to the decline of the municipality in Labour's scheme of things. He pointed out that the Labour Party has been "nurtured in the belief that Socialism could and should be achieved through the activities of local authorities." He asked, "why the Labour Party ceased to believe in local government as one of the instruments of realising the socialist commonwealth?" and urged it in this respect "to retrace its steps to the greater wisdom of its earlier beliefs" (see Bert Oram's "Social Ownership In The Sixties" page 1). That this is historically true is proved by a cursory glance at the early Fabian Essays which devoted much of their intellectual labours to working out schemes for Municipal Milk Supplies, Gas Undertakings, and even Pawnshops!

The resistance to "municipal enterprise" has come from two different sources. One source is the instinctive conservatism of local authorities, strait-jacketed by central government regulation, and inhibited by reasons of financial "prudence." The other source came from the Labour and Trade Union movement during the controversy over clause four. It was felt by many that municipal enterprise, or "other forms of social ownership" were being advocated as a counter, or as an

alternative to the continuing insistence amongst the stalwarts of the Labour Party and trade unions that the Labour Party has no *raison d'être* outside the implementation of clause four of the Constitution. This was interpreted as simply the extension of nationalisation to "the commanding heights."

That there was no necessary conflict between clause four and "municipal enterprise" has been borne out of recent years, when nationalisation and municipal enterprise have both been subject to a barrage of misrepresentation.

Fortunately there are those in the Labour Party who are beginning once again to reassert the prime importance of "public ownership" or "public enterprise" in all its manifold forms. The defensive, apologetic note is being dropped and a bold advocacy of public enterprise is replacing it. At this point, it is only fair to say that the contributors in this volume do not necessarily share each others opinions or political philosophies—and are certainly in no sense responsible for those of the Editor.

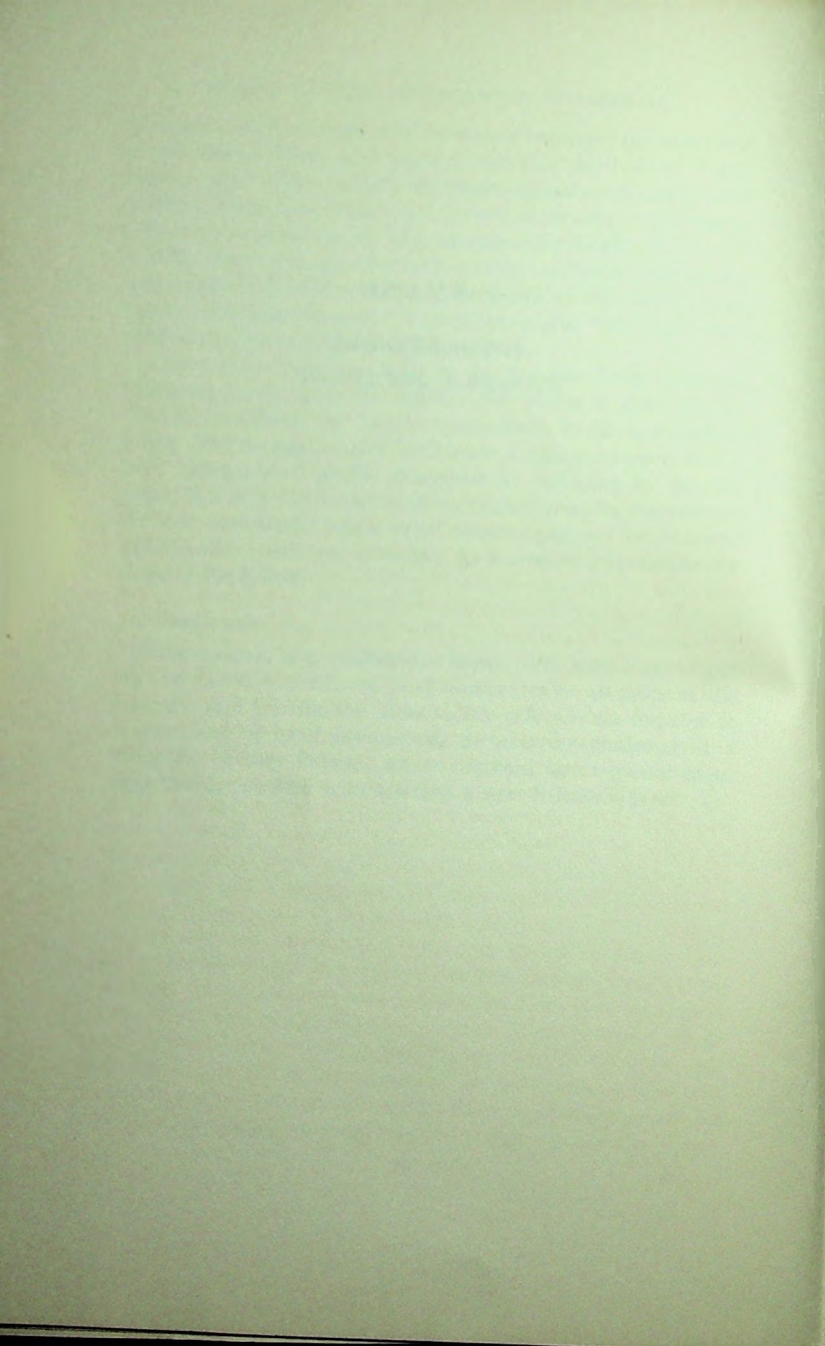
### *In Conclusion*

This volume, it is confidently hoped, will shed a new light on the varied activities of local authorities in all parts of the country, and provide the ideas which will give an impetus to a reshaping of local government to meet the challenge of a twentieth-century Britain, where national and regional planning are the context within which a new Britain is built.

## PART ONE

### *Arts and Festivals* *Recreation and Leisure*





## TOWARDS THE CIVIC THEATRE

HUGH JENKINS

WHAT is a civic theatre—a building owned by the local authority and used by the various amateur groups in the community from time to time? Is that a civic theatre? Well certainly it is, of a sort. As is the theatre owned by the civic authority and used by visiting professional companies. But what about the local authority which makes an annual grant towards a non-profit making repertory company, but does not own the theatre in which it works. Here there is a civic supported company, but no civic theatre. Let us begin by having a look at the background against which this rather confusing pattern is being drawn.

There is no longer any doubt that the civic theatre is the theatre of the future, and freed from the long burden of arguing the proposition in general, we are ready to discuss it in particular. And none too soon. Indeed, in some cases too late, for the sad errors of architects whose confidence has exceeded their knowledge are already to be seen about us.

There is no good tradition of theatre building in this country. The old commercial theatres were often a pattern of what to avoid, rather than an example of what to do. Enlargement of the auditorium to the maximum, and the reduction of the backstage area to the minimum, may have been satisfactory in music halls, particularly from the financial point of view, for a relatively short period around the turn of the century. Such buildings, however, have little to do with the problems of presenting plays in ways in which the abilities of the actors and the appreciation of the audience may be exploited and extended to the full. But the purpose of this article is not to gambol upon the slopes of such sweet contro-



versy. We intend neither to break a lance in favour of theatre in the round, nor to rush to the defence of the squares. We shall not discuss the ideal size of a modern theatre, nor the question of whether multi-purpose or variable theatres are practicable. We are concerned with different problems, which, so far as we are aware, have been so little examined that the basic information on which to form any conclusions is not yet fully known. I refer to the relationship between the civic theatres, the local authority, the Arts Council and the Government, and to questions of financial and administrative control. We are concerned with the ownership of buildings and with the financial support of companies.

### *Background*

A survey of municipal entertainment in England and Wales\* carried out by the Institute of Municipal Entertainment and presented to a conference of local authorities at Fairfield Hall, Croydon, in April of this year, reached the conclusion that the average nett expenditure of municipal entertainment is a fraction over a 1d. rate, or a little more than a sixth of the 6d. rate permitted under Section 132 of the Local Government Act of 1948. It is interesting to note that the former constituency of Aneurin Bevan, who was responsible for the Act, Ebbw Vale, has taken full advantage of it. This Urban District, with a population of 28,000, had an annual expenditure on municipal entertainment in 1961-62 equivalent to the product of a 5.95d. rate. For this expenditure, the Ebbw Vale Urban District Council provides an enormous variety of activities. The Entertainments Committee spends roughly £24,000 a year and gets half of this in income, leaving the remainder to be found from the 6d. rate. There is a municipal ballroom and a municipal theatre, but the latter seems to be let out to amateur organisations. There appears to be no professional civic theatre. And from the other promotions which the Council supports, it is clear that the 6d. rate is regarded as being more for the purpose of generating activity among its

\* *A Survey of Municipal Entertainment in England and Wales*, Institute of Entertainment. Available from 733 High Road, London, N.17. 10s. 6d. post paid.

own citizens, than for the other purpose of encouraging and then feeding a "cultural hunger."

The range of expenditure over the country as a whole is enormous. The I.M.E. survey covers the year 1961-62 and in that year Brynmawr in Brecknockshire, with a population of 6,500 and a 1d. rate producing only £190, in 1961 spent a 4s. 7d. rate on municipal entertainment! Their income from municipal entertainment in the same year was a 4s. 10d. rate! It would be pleasant to report that this remarkable example of profitable civic municipal enterprise arises from the ownership of a civic theatre, but in fact it comes from the ownership of a cinema. In the following year, 1962-63, Brynmawr purchased the only other cinema in the town and developed the site for housing purposes, leaving themselves in a monopoly position with the result that their profits for 1962-63 increased and they transferred the product of a 4½d. rate to the General Rate Fund!

Of nearly a thousand authorities questioned, more than half were promoting entertainment of one sort or another, 312 submitted Nil returns and 149 failed to reply. Of the 535, only sixty-two promote or sponsor a theatre. Band concerts are the most popular form of expenditure, with indoor art exhibitions second and children's entertainment third. Ball-room dances and orchestral concerts come fourth and fifth. Theatre is number fourteen on the list, below bowls tournaments, horticultural shows, lectures and swimming galas but above beauty competitions, professional wrestling and netball tournaments.

The survey reveals that in the year in question 43 per cent of the total gross expenditure on municipal entertainment of £7,500,000 was spent on halls, theatres and other buildings; 7.5 per cent on cultural entertainment, and 32.2 per cent on what is described as other entertainment; 5.2 per cent went in grants and guarantees and the remainder on sporting and other activities. Against this gross expenditure, was set an income of nearly £5,000,000, leaving a nett expenditure of only £2,500,000.

At this point darkness descends. We still know little about civic theatres and I hope that Mr. Fortune, the efficient

Conference Secretary, may be persuaded to re-examine his returns to see whether from them some further information about the position of civic theatres can be obtained.

*Getting the facts*

Meanwhile, we must turn to other sources of information. What does the Arts Council tell us? Quite a lot about what the Arts Council does but, understandably, not so much about what local authorities do. We can learn from its Annual Report that, in the year ended March 31st, 1963, the Arts Council spent nearly £50,000 on the drama in Scotland, and that most of this was received by four theatres. But we do not know precisely what the Corporations of Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Perth do about these theatres. However, it seems safe to say that there is no civic theatre as such in Scotland at all. The exact relationship of the Cardiff Corporation and the New Theatre is no doubt well known in Cardiff, but it does not appear to be on public record. When we survey the Arts Council's grants and guarantees for England, we find that there is only one civic theatre which calls itself by that name—the Chesterfield Civic Theatre Ltd.

When the Arts Council last published an analysis of municipal theatre aid, in 1960, the only authority which was contributing as much as a 2d. rate to a civic theatre was Canterbury, which was supporting the Canterbury Theatre Trust, which runs the Marlowe Theatre in that city. This was a case in which the local authority was contributing substantially more than the Arts Council but, even so, their combined contribution only accounted for 23 per cent of the total operating cost, 77 per cent of which came from the box office. In most other cases, the box office paid for 80 per cent to 90 per cent of the total cost of running the theatre. Obviously a more generous rate of financial contribution from local authorities is necessary if the civic theatre or civic-aided theatre is to make a really significant contribution to the cultural life of the country. At the moment it is certainly not doing so.

The Arts Council has recently undertaken another similar survey. This has not yet been published but it is likely to be

included in its next Annual Report. Canterbury's contribution has increased to 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., Carlisle has come in with 2 6/7d. No other authority appears to be exceeding 1d. rate though Colchester spends exactly 1d.

The Arts Council is not responsible for the following figures and they must, therefore, be taken as assumptions, but a study of what is available leads the writer to the conclusion that in 1959, local authorities made donations towards the operating costs of their theatres to a total of something over £30,000 and that, five years later in 1963, the figure had doubled to nearly £60,000. In the same period, the Arts Council's help also doubled from something in the region of £45,000 to rather more than £90,000. If these figures are correct, and it must be emphasised that they are no more than informed estimates, it will be seen that, as yet, local authorities as a whole are simply not entitled to regard themselves as patrons of the arts of any real significance, at least as far as the theatre is concerned. Even in respect of those theatres with which they have a special relationship, they are permitting meagre national funds to contribute on the whole twice as much as they do themselves. Sums of this order may preserve existence, they are not big enough to give life. On the other hand, it should be emphasised that these figures refer only to donations towards operating costs. They take no account of what, in some cases, is the major contribution of the local authority, the provision of the theatre.

#### *A regional survey*

In an inquiry sponsored by the University of Hull and the Yorkshire North District of the Workers' Educational Association and published earlier this year,\* the conclusion was reached that in the North and Midlands, only Hull, Manchester and Sunderland had a civic theatre. This was defined as being one owned and maintained by the local authority. If the definition was further narrowed by the requirement of a permanent company, then the only theatre of those examined entitled to be called a civic theatre in the full sense of the word was the Manchester Library Theatre, where the

\* *The Theatre and the Local Authority*. Hull University, 45.



building is owned by the Council and a theatre with a permanent company is administered by a Council sub-committee. Sunderland is run by a local authority committee, while Hull has established a non-profit making trust, but neither engage a standing company.

The other theatres included in this survey were described as civic aided rather than as civic theatres and these included the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and the Liverpool Playhouse. Three post-war built theatres, the Belgrade, Coventry, the Phoenix, Leicester and the Nottingham Playhouse, are also included in the survey and categorised as civic aided. It seems to the writer that the distinctions adopted by this group are well founded and should be maintained.

Most of these theatres are owned and administered by non-profit making trusts operating through a theatre manager or artistic director. A comparison of four such trusts reveals that the Belgrade, Coventry, and the New Theatre, Kingston-upon-Hull, are firmly established under civic control, with councillors predominating on the trust to the extent of two to one, in each case the chair being taken by an alderman. In Nottingham, the councillors are in a minority and the chairman of the trust is the Vice-Chancellor of Nottingham University. The Phoenix Trust (Leicester) is made up of a mixture of local people, with only two members of the Council, in spite of the fact that the Council bought the site and built the new theatre.

In this study, the amount spent on the civic theatre is, where possible, surveyed separately. In Nottingham, a 10d. rate is spent on libraries and museums and 1s. on playing fields but the Corporation charges the new Playhouse management an economic rent, so that the new Playhouse which receives £13,000 per annum is to pay back a rent of £26,000 per annum plus rates! Birmingham's contribution to the Repertory Theatre is only one-fourteenth of a 1d. rate—£5,000 a year, but Birmingham is building a new civic theatre to replace the old one at a cost of £500,000.

Coventry seems to require that the Belgrade Theatre repays the £300,000 cost of building the theatre at a rate of £18,000 per annum over forty years. Its own annual contribution to-

wards this burden is £6,500 a year, one-third of a 1d. rate. The Arts Council has to find the rest. Hull has bought the theatre and does not yet appear to be asking anyone to pay for it. Leicester built its Phoenix Theatre for £30,000 and is expecting the Trust it has set up to find £7,000 of that. On the other hand, Leicester appears to charge no rent at all to the Trust for the use of the theatre. Liverpool made its first grant of £7,500 to the Playhouse last year. The Manchester Library Theatre is part of the city's Public Library. All expenses are paid by the Corporation and receipts go into the General Rate fund. Sunderland bought the Empire from Moss Empires for £52,000 and is finding the product of a 2d. rate, between £25,000 and £30,000, towards the running costs. On the whole, if those concerned had been deliberately devising as confusing a set of relationships, financial and otherwise, as could be found for the purpose of making it impossible to draw any general conclusions, they could hardly have done better. On finances, the conclusion of this survey is that more money "could and should be spent on these theatres if they are to have the same cultural value as the civic art gallery or library."

### *Policy*

Examining the plays presented at seven civic or civic-aided theatres during the immediately preceding season, the survey found that Birmingham and Belgrade, Manchester and Nottingham presented a varied programme. Liverpool tended to play safe, while Hull and Sunderland presented little of significance. Only one foreign classic was represented and there was no Chekhov, Brecht, Ibsen, Molière, Sartre, Lorca, Pirandello, Strindberg, Durrenmatt or any other foreign plays of such standing. Most of the theatres provided some social or cultural amenities in the way of a restaurant, a bar or café, exhibitions or lectures.

The survey also looked at the amateur theatre in the North and Midlands and found it flourishing.

This survey reached certain conclusions. Some of them are as follows :



that the maximum seating capacity for civic theatres should be 900;

that control should be vested in a committee or trust;

that there should be an artistic director responsible for the choice and presentation of the plays, working with a resident company;

that there should be not less than two or three weeks rehearsal and that the actors should be better paid than is often the case at present;

that the plays presented should maintain a balance between the old and the new and should include foreign classics;

that the trend towards the development of theatres as centres of the arts should be encouraged and that exhibitions of paintings, recitals of classical music, jazz and poetry readings should be held;

that there should be good public relations and perhaps a public relations officer;

that contact with young people should be deliberately fostered and encouraged.

It has seemed worthwhile to spend some time on this survey as the rest of the country has not yet been examined in such detail. We know that great work has been done at Bristol, that Hornchurch led the way. We know that some seaside resorts have set an example which others have yet to follow. We know that some civic theatres are excellent employers and that others are not so good but we need much more information.

Two attempts are in being with a view to collecting it. The first is a survey which is now in hand by the recently formed National Council for Civic Theatres. Mr. Reginald Birks, the energetic Director of the Sunderland Empire, is acting as secretary of this body and is circulating to local authorities a questionnaire designed to discover some of the required information. The other is a conference now in planning and to be sponsored jointly by the Theatres' Advisory Council and the Association of Municipal Corporations. This conference is to take place at the L.C.C.'s County Hall early in 1965. Here it is expected that the people running civic theatres in

various parts of the country will come and describe in detail the exact nature of the relationship which exists between the theatre and its administration and the local authority.\* There will also be a day to discuss theatre design.

All that can safely be said at the moment is that, in general, the amount of civic assistance given by any local authority is normally exceeded by the Arts Council, and that there appears to be no case in which the combined Arts Council and local authority support even approaches the box-office take. We are very far short of the pattern quite common on the continent of Europe in which the State and local authority contribution equals or exceeds the box-office revenue.

Incidentally, all the information that we have suggests that civic theatres are more often than not very successful from one of the main points of view, that of attracting an audience. Most of them play to between 60 per cent and 80 per cent of their capacity. There are many commercial theatres which would be glad to do as well.

### *An interim view*

In general, it seems to me that the approach of the tutorial class which carried out the North and Midlands survey is correct and the conclusions valid within their context.

When the whole field has been examined it may be possible to form some general ideas. In the meantime, I would hazard a few suggestions. First of all, any municipality contemplating the building or rebuilding of a civic theatre should approach the Theatres' Advisory Council or the Association of British Theatre Technicians. This will, at least, prevent the building of any more theatres in which members of the audience cannot see the stage and there is no provision for the actors to do their job properly. The area concerned with the presentation of plays, backstage, dressing rooms, costume, administration and so on, needs to be as large as the auditorium area, and not a mere fraction of it. It is the engine of the theatre and if it is constructed without the advantage of adequate and modern technical knowledge the theatre will be a failure,

\* An analysis of theatres owned by local authorities and other public bodies will be presented to the conference.

however much care is lavished upon the comfort of the audience.

Secondly, we need to carry further the definitions approached in the North and Midlands survey. It seems to me that the primary role of the municipality is the provision of a good theatre. A community which has made that provision is entitled to say that it has a civic theatre. In my view, the whole burden of the provision of the building, including repayment of loans, and interest and maintenance, should be the responsibility of the local authority. When the building is let to a commercial company, a commercial rent may be charged, but when it is let to a non-profit making company or, as may be the case, to amateurs, a more reasonable, and in some cases a peppercorn, rent should be all that is required. But many communities will want to go further than providing a building. They will want to have their own company. Just as we now have at long last a National Theatre Company which will eventually be playing at its own National Theatre and elsewhere, so we must develop not only in Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool, but also in other large towns, civic companies which will play at their own civic theatres and elsewhere. I am inclined to doubt whether the civic circuit which has been talked about will amount to anything until it develops into a medium for the exchange of civic companies. A community which provides not only a theatre but is also prepared to support a company is entitled not only to expect but to be guaranteed State help. I suggest that a combined State and municipal annual contribution to a civic theatre might properly rise to a maximum of 50 per cent of the box-office receipts and that half this sum should be found by the State through the Arts Council and the other half by the municipality from the rates.

On this basis, any sizeable town should be able to establish its own repertoire company. By this, of course, I mean the system of taking half a dozen plays into the repertoire, exactly as an opera company does, and playing them in succession over a season. This is the most expensive method of presenting plays, for one has to have a company large enough to tackle six productions and long enough rehearsal to do them properly

and get them into the repertoire, but it is by far the best method and, at the moment, it is only being employed at the National Theatre, at the Royal Shakespeare, at Nottingham, at Pitlochry in Scotland and at a few other places.

With a standing company a civic theatre should not only serve an audience, it should encourage a flourishing of the arts in the community and provide new playwrights, actors and directors their opportunity on the ground from which they spring. The civic theatre is not to replace the defunct touring theatre. It is to do something to counteract the concentration on London. Its object should not merely be to present in the provinces things which have already been done in London but to present new plays and to present old plays so well that people who love the theatre will want to come out from London to see them.

The title I was given for this article was "Trends in Civic Theatre." As the result of writing it, I have come to the conclusion that there is, as yet, little civic theatre in this country in any full sense of the word. Nevertheless, I am still convinced that what I said at the beginning was true—that the civic theatre is the theatre of the future. If it is not true, then the future of the theatre is much darker than I believe to be the case. To the contrary, I think that the true civic theatre and company will play a major role in the coming theatrical renaissance.

Since this article was written, Mr. William Kendall, with whom I share the Honorary Secretaryship of the Theatres' Advisory Council, has prepared a document for the County Hall Conference to be held in February. It is a list of theatres in the U.K. owned by local authorities or other public bodies. Excluded from the list are open air theatres, civic halls and seasonal theatres.

Mr. Kendall finds twenty-nine "full-time" theatres owned by local authorities and a further twenty-three owned by other public bodies.

The twenty-nine are sub-divided into thirteen without resident repertory companies and sixteen with such companies. The majority of the sixteen are leased to a Trust or to a non-



profit distributing repertory company. The arrangements are different in almost every case. Most of the thirteen are directly owned.

Of the twenty-three theatres owned by public bodies other than local authorities only five are without a resident repertory company.

Mr. Kendall also finds another twenty-five local authority theatre building projects in various stages of preparation.

The scene has changed, it is no longer a picture of old theatres being pulled down or put to other use but of local authorities beginning to accept their responsibilities and to shoulder them.

On the other hand, the extraordinary variety of Trust and other arrangements which have been made and are being made suggests that they cannot all be right. We shall know more after the County Hall Conference.

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Hugh Jenkins is Assistant General Secretary of Equity, and Joint Secretary of the Theatre Advisory Council. He is also a member of the L.C.C.

## THE LEGACY OF THE L.C.C.

RICHARD EDMONDS

IN July 1964 His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, his arm strapped up after a polo accident, flew in by helicopter to the Crystal Palace National Recreation Centre, on the heights of Sydenham in South London, and, with his usual happy mixture of formality and informality, declared the centre open.

Standing in the great sports hall, a magnificent structure  $1\frac{2}{3}$  of an acre in extent, the Duke paid tribute to all who had brought their talents to bear on creating this new centre for training coaches and leaders for coaching in a wide range of games and sports.

Few, who on the night of November 30th, 1936, had witnessed the dramatic spectacle of the old Crystal Palace in flames, could have foreseen the remarkable transformation which had been wrought, and it was little wonder that the Duke went out of his way to praise the L.C.C. ("that much maligned body," as he called it) which had provided the initiative in this matter; not for the first time in its life, but almost for the last, giving a national lead and getting away from the localised view.

I say, almost for the last time, because on this July day the L.C.C. was within less than a year of its demise, a victim of the hotly challenged London Government Act of 1963. But what a record of municipal enterprise it has left behind it, in the fields of architecture and planning, in education and the arts, and much else besides. This moment, when it hands over to the Greater London Council and the new London boroughs, is surely one to take stock of that record and perhaps to bear in mind what one of its leading councillors once



said, with a touch of flamboyancy, a sense of pride, and with telling force, "We are the heirs of the Medici. As they felt about Florence and worked for its good, so we feel about London, and into it should go all the quality that we can command." Brave words these; but not mere words, because a wise authority, using its political judgment, can, if it has the will, back them up with deeds and, what is more, with hard cash. That is in fact what the L.C.C. has done, even earning unstinted admiration for its record from that ill-starred, not always well-informed Royal Commission which presided over the circumstances of its downfall.

Before we return to the Crystal Palace Sports Centre, that last high kick of endeavour by the L.C.C., let us look at some of the major events of that unique authority's career, particularly in those latter days when Herbert Morrison, scorning Government timidity and taking his own powerful line, replaced Rennie's antiquated masterpiece of Waterloo Bridge with a new bridge, a symbol of modern progress suited to modern traffic needs, which the town took readily to its heart.

### *South Bank*

The decision to rebuild Waterloo Bridge indeed triggered off a whole series of developments, all of them closely associated with the South Bank of the Thames and lying in an area of general decay. It was in 1948 that the L.C.C. decided to press ahead with these plans for the mainly derelict riverside, making a new river wall and a concert hall which would be ready in time for the Festival of Britain in 1951.

The new 1,200 ft. river wall of concrete faced with Cornish granite secured the reclamation of over  $4\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land from the river, and construction was finished in 1950 three months ahead of schedule and allowing the builders much needed extra time in preparing the Festival Pavilions. At the time of writing, the river wall is receiving a further extension under Waterloo Bridge and a little way downstream, creating yet another site for the Council to develop.

Eventually, in accordance with the London Development Plan, the reclamation will extend right down to Southwark

Bridge and St. Saviour's Cathedral, giving a new life and a new look to this neighbourhood which was once London's theatreland and a rendezvous for the bear-baiters and entertainers of Elizabethan days.

While the river wall was progressing work was going on on the Royal Festival Hall, the very centrepiece of the South Bank project for the Festival of Britain, and, as time was pressing, it was decided first to concentrate on the great auditorium for 3,000 people, leaving the smaller hall, for chamber music and recitals, to be completed later.

The building was finished off with a temporary end next to Belvedere Road, the accommodation for artists was not completed, and no lifts were included, but in all essentials here was London with a fine new concert hall, and a flying start had been given to one of the most ambitious municipal cultural projects of our time.

It was significant that much of the capital cost of the Festival Hall had been defrayed by the rates, thus securing that the building would not in future years be a constant heavy financial burden upon the Londoner. It was no less significant also that the arrangements which the L.C.C. was able to make with the Shell Company, for the crection of a high-rise building on the upstream side of Hungerford Bridge, and for a rather less massive building on the downstream side, brought such an effective return to the Council that it was possible to contemplate the creation of new riverside gardens, part of the continuous link planned between Vauxhall and Southwark, and also the provision of a site for the National Theatre on the downstream side of County Hall.

Plans for the Shell buildings went forward between 1955 and 1960 accompanied by a deal of public criticism. It was felt that the high rise building in Portland stone was already out of date before it was built, and there were many who thought that London was missing an opportunity in not vicing with New York's Lever building, or Copenhagen's towering S.A.S. building created by Arne Jacobson.

Eventually, however, the Shell building received planning permission, and today, with its smaller Shell neighbour, it towers over the South Bank, bringing to the area the vast

prestige of a great company and valuable financial assets for the Council as ground landlord and developer.

Shell does more than that. Those who come in to Waterloo Station each day and walk to County Hall, find the open courtyards of the Shell enclave cool and pleasant to stroll across, quite different from the cribbed, cabined and confined feeling one gets in the City of London. The visitor also sees the beginnings of a new pedestrian walkway system, which will eventually enable those in the neighbourhood to walk at first floor level from the Festival Hall through the Shell building to the main concourse of Waterloo Station. Already several of the bridges and walkways are complete, a fine example of the Council putting into practice some of the principles so widely admired in the Buchanan Report. Shell has, of course, brought problems in its train; for instance, the heavy concentration of private cars getting in and out of the car parks at morning and evening peak, and this I understand leads to many people staying on well after working hours to enjoy the splendid swimming bath and the other club facilities so handsomely provided for the staff.

All in all, the benefit to the South Bank has been immense, a fine example of municipal and private enterprise working together for the general good.

But to return to the National Theatre. Originally a site was set aside for this opposite the entrance to the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington. The L.C.C.'s offer of a site on the South Bank proved much more acceptable, however, and this idea was approved as long ago as 1945.

Since then nearly twenty years have passed, but the long delays created by financial stringency and Government uncertainty were finally resolved in the early sixties, and in the happiest possible way, the Council agreeing with the Government and the Joint Council of the National Theatre on a scheme that went much wider than anything previously contemplated. The terms were that there should be participation by the Old Vic, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, and Sadler's Wells; that the Government should contribute £1,000,000 towards the capital cost, and that the L.C.C., in contributing

the balance of capital expenditure, would be expected to find about £1,300,000. In addition, there would be subvention by the Government of the companies using the theatre, and the L.C.C., in this connection, would continue its contributions which had in the recent past done so much to assist Sadler's Wells, and add to them to make a total annual subvention of £100,000. Finally it was decided that there should be representation by the Government and by the Council on the managing body, to be known as the National Theatre Company.

From these firm proposals, which were made known in April 1962, and which undoubtedly stemmed from continuous pressure by Sir Isaac Hayward and his colleagues on the L.C.C., there was one major departure, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre indicating that they did not wish to take part in the scheme, wishing to remain artistically and financially independent. Apart from making a slight reduction in annual subvention the Government accepted the situation, and the Joint Council of the National Theatre was able to go ahead and prepare an outline scheme. One of the main points in this scheme was the erection on the South Bank of an amphitheatre auditorium and an opera house, which would be two distinct buildings on separate sites so as to allow room on the theatre site for a proscenium auditorium to be added at a later date to replace the Old Vic, which meanwhile, carrying on on its traditional site in the Waterloo Road, would serve as the proscenium auditorium of the National Theatre.

The two selected sites lie between County Hall and Hungerford Bridge and will be separated by an open space, now used as a car park, which will be created in front of Shell's high rise building.

In 1949, at the time of the passage of the National Theatre Act, the cost of building the theatre, excluding the site, was estimated to be about £1,000,000. Since then building costs have more than doubled, and the cost is likely to be considerably more than £2,000,000.

There is no doubt at all that the Government dallied shamefully over this matter, failing to act upon the recommendation of the Committee of Enquiry set up by the Arts



Council on Housing the Arts in Great Britain. It was equally true that the L.C.C. was unrelenting in its pressure for action, never for a moment forgetting the cultural possibilities of the South Bank which had already been so clearly proven by the wonderful success of the Royal Festival Hall.

With these vital decisions on the National Theatre in 1962 it could almost be said that the planning stage of the first major phase of South Bank redevelopment was complete, because at the same time work was going ahead on the re-alignment of the southern approach to Waterloo Bridge, a scheme being carried out by the Council having particularly in mind the needs of the great stream of pedestrians pouring across Waterloo Bridge every day from the station to their offices in the West End and the City. This southern approach has been prepared to a very high design standard, and its broad open concourse, below the roadway level, offers something new and attractive in pedestrian provision. The concourse, it is understood, is to have a public house in the centre.

During the re-alignment of the southern approach to the bridge a new home is being found in the vicinity for the National Film Theatre, which for several years was accommodated beneath the arches of the bridge, and which certainly forms part of the South Bank's growing cultural tradition.

The year 1964, the last year of the L.C.C., was indeed one of special activity on the South Bank with four key contracts all going ahead at the same time and all, much to the discomfort of the contractors, on sites adjacent to one another. For side by side with the bridge re-alignment, where the old approach structure had to be sliced neatly in two, the one half being used for traffic while the other was demolished, contractors were busy on the small auditorium and recital room, which had been held over at the time of the Festival of Britain. Contractors were busy also on the extension and completion of the Royal Festival Hall, installing lifts, providing a port cochere for cars and taxis on the riverward side, and generally improving the facilities of the hall. Architecturally this was also seen to be an immense improvement, and



the new appearance of the building from Westminster Bridge and at an angle from the Westminster side became indeed most impressive, no doubt fulfilling the original intentions of the architect. Contract No. 4, also adjoining, was the reclamation of a further section of river by the extension of the river wall.

From these great beginnings the South Bank will no doubt in the years ahead go from strength to strength. It is perhaps regrettable that the new shops, so badly needed, now coming into being on the railway site facing the main Shell concourse, are part of the street pattern rather than of a precinctual pattern, but none the less there is much evidence of progressive planning, and one cannot resist a thrill at walking on the completed section of the Shell high level walkway or contemplating the moment when that same walkway links with the box offices of the National Theatre, the new opera house, and the Royal Festival Hall. Here then on the South Bank is the pattern for the future, the product of notable municipal enterprise across three decades of intensive planning and construction. Everywhere there is evidence that quality of materials has gone into the work, born of the experience that cutting capital costs is often the high road to increased maintenance charges, and that quality of planning has been of a progressively high order. What will the future of this part of London be now that the Council has set its hand upon it? It may well be that Abercrombie's surmise will prove true, and that development having been triggered off on the South Bank and at the Elephant and Castle (that centre of blight and blight where the L.C.C. also made an area of comprehensive development), the intervening streets will in due course undergo changes on the same scale and many of us will live to see a new and much finer south London. There is already testimony to this in the St. Thomas's Hospital redevelopment adjoining County Hall, and beyond that extensive changes are likely at Vauxhall Cross; although these may not be for the better if Covent Garden, that vast blot of congestion in the centre of the West End, is moved to the vicinity of the railway yards at Nine Elms.

While the Elephant and Castle redevelopment has been

a product of the work of the L.C.C.'s Town Planning Committee working in conjunction with the Education Committee, which built the very fine new London College of Printing, and the Housing Committee, which has done some excellent building in the district, the creation of the South Bank has been the especial task of the South Bank Sub-Committee of the General Purposes Committee of the Council.

### *Crystal Palace*

This sub-committee, lately renamed the Special Arts and Development Sub-Committee, has been the guiding hand and vital force in all that has taken place, and it has had too the special surveillance of the Crystal Palace. This came about because the Trustees of the Crystal Palace realised that with the resources at their disposal they could not even begin to face the task of reconstruction after the fire of 1936. A new controlling body was needed. The L.C.C., having indicated its willingness to assume that role, the London County Council (Crystal Palace) Act of 1951 was passed, giving that authority the duties and responsibilities of the Trustees to use the famous site for the purposes of education and recreation and the furtherance of commerce, art, and industry.

In 1952 the L.C.C. took over the derelict grounds and at once set about clearance and redevelopment. One of the first tasks was to improve the seventy acres of the Crystal Palace Park. A large rock and water garden was built, a children's zoo opened, and the famous life-size prehistoric monsters restored to their former glory, gazing ferociously from the undergrowth and along the lakeside.

Mindful of the traditions of the Palace, and of its metropolitan and national significance, the L.C.C. in 1952 asked Sir Gerald Barry, the man who had directed the 1951 Festival of Britain, to submit a scheme for the future.

One part of his plan was for a Great Exhibition Centre on the forty-acre site at the highest point of the Palace grounds. The Federation of British Industries has also prepared a scheme on similar lines, and it may well be that the Government, the Greater London Council, and industry will combine to bring it to fruition. The estimated cost is well over

## THE LEGACY OF THE L.C.C.

£12,000,000, but the benefits to British industry could be immense.

The other part of Sir Gerald's plan was the creation of the national centre for training in sport. The outcome of this is the Crystal Palace National Recreation Centre, which has been designed and built by the L.C.C. at a cost of £2,700,000, £100,000 of which was a gift from the King George VI Memorial Foundation for the construction of the handsome hostel block which stands a hundred yards or so from the main buildings of the centre.

In presenting his report to the L.C.C., Sir Gerald Barry declared :

"It may perhaps seem remarkable that the British nation which invented and bequeathed to others most of the forms of sport which are now enjoyed throughout the Western world should have no central home for sport of their own to which their own athletes and those of other nations can look as a focal point. Several other much smaller countries possess such institutions and the existence of such a place here with the prestige which it would bring would be likely to act as a sharp incentive to athletes and trainers throughout the country."

The Crystal Palace National Recreation Centre is designed to make good that deficiency. It has now been handed over under lease to the Central Council of Physical Recreation who, from a very early stage, were consulted as to the general requirements of the place.

As the south of England had no swimming pool of Olympic or international standard for racing or diving, it was considered essential to give the maximum emphasis to aquatic sports with independent pools for racing, diving and teaching. In order to ensure the most extensive use of the centre throughout the year the indoor training areas, practice rooms, swimming pools, and changing rooms are located within the vast structure of the Sports Hall, which is 284 ft. long and 266 ft. wide with one of the largest copper covered roofs ever built in Europe.

The two major elements in the Sports Hall, the Indoor

Arena and the swimming baths, are separated from each other by a public concourse at high level. The eight-lane racing pool is 55 yards long and has a uniform depth of 6 ft. 9 in. It is equipped with an electronic swim timing apparatus developed by officers of the L.C.C.

Outside the Sports Hall is the Stadium, partially excavated from the hillside near the Crystal Palace railway station. Its sickle-shaped stand has accommodation for 12,000 spectators, 4,000 of them under cover, and it looks down on to the football pitch and the 440-yard running track with its seven lanes on the circuit and ten lanes on the straight.

This then in broad outline is the new training centre already helping to set the sights high in British athletics. As I said earlier it is the L.C.C.'s last legacy, and maybe its greatest; a legacy for which it surely deserves to be long remembered.

In the years ahead we shall hear the powerful voice of the Greater London Council. Like the L.C.C. it will also no doubt set the sights high; it too will give a lead, no doubt bringing a new sense of pride to the great region of south-east England; but there will be many of us who will look back on the L.C.C.'s unique achievement and particular legacy in a very special way for the simple, very human reason that we were allowed to have some part in it, and it came to be a part of our lives. The words about "the heirs of the Medici" were perhaps not so flamboyant after all, just a reflection of a very proper London pride.

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Richard Edmonds is Chairman of the Roads Committee of the L.C.C. and the Highways and Traffic Committee of the new G.L.C. He is also a member of the Special Development and Arts Sub-committee of the L.C.C.



## THE ST. PANCRAS ARTS FESTIVAL

WILLIAM TAYLOR

THERE can be little doubt that the coming decade will see a much greater participation in the sponsorship of the arts by local authorities than ever before; and in this respect we shall move much closer to European countries, where the maintenance of orchestras and opera and theatre companies by local municipalities is accepted without question. But it is of vital importance that as the contribution of local authorities to the arts increases it should not be as a series of indiscriminate "hand-outs," whether they are called grants or subsidies; rather it should be the result of a coherent and co-ordinated policy. Naturally, local circumstances will play a large part in deciding the arts policy of a local council and there will be many variations, but they should all have a common basis: that of promoting among local citizens an interest in the arts, either as participants or as audience, thereby encouraging them to make intelligent use of the increasing leisure which we are told the present technological revolution will provide. One such co-ordinated arts policy has evolved over the past ten years in St. Pancras, where a full and varied programme of concerts, opera, drama and exhibitions is arranged throughout the year, culminating each spring in the month-long St. Pancras Arts Festival, now in its eleventh year.

But long before the Festival was started, and even before the passing of Aneurin Bevan's Local Government Act of 1948, St. Pancras had begun to promote professional orchestral concerts and recitals, through the medium of the St. Pancras Arts and Civic Council, a borough sponsored organisation set up in 1946 and inspired by the Indian statesman, V. K.

Krishna Menon, who was then Chairman of the Libraries Committee. The Arts and Civic Council was a typically British device to enable the Borough Council to promote indirectly concerts which it had no power to finance directly. It consisted of local voluntary representatives together with elected members of the Libraries Committee, and the Chairman of the latter was *ipso facto* chairman of the Arts and Civic Council. The Libraries Committee made an annual grant to the Arts and Civic Council to enable it to promote music, ballet, films and other similar activities within the borough.

Thus, when the Act of 1948 allowed local authorities to provide "entertainments" St. Pancras already had considerable experience in this field, and the Borough Council's powers under the new Act were referred to the Libraries Committee. With the acquisition of these new powers the natural tendency was for the Libraries Committee to keep under its own control the more costly artistic activities, such as professional orchestral concerts; thus the scope of the Arts and Civic Council became narrower and its annual grant correspondingly smaller. After a year or two the inevitable and logical decision was taken, and the Arts and Civic Council was replaced by a simple Arts Sub-Committee of the Libraries Committee, with five co-opted members to represent the various arts. The present Arts Sub-Committee has among its members such distinguished representatives of the arts as Malcolm Arnold and E. Martin Browne.

In the years immediately following 1948 St. Pancras continued to promote and sponsor the arts; but the various events were unrelated and there was no co-ordinated policy. This developed largely through the medium of the St. Pancras Arts Festival.

The Festival had its origins in the celebrations of Coronation Year, 1953. As part of the local festivities the Libraries Department organised a large art exhibition, entitled "St. Pancras Artists: Past and Present" and a Drama Competition for local amateur dramatic societies. These events were received so enthusiastically that the Libraries Committee agreed to make them annual occasions; and the suggestion

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was made that the two events should be held simultaneously, combined with an orchestral concert, under the general title of the St. Pancras Arts Festival. The following year a play and an opera were added to the programme and the Arts Festival was well and truly established.

It grew rapidly in size and complexity and very soon had to be expanded to three, and then four, weeks; the quality of the productions improved equally quickly and the Festival began to be noticed by Press and public outside the boundaries of the borough. Soon the decision had to be taken, somewhat reluctantly, to eliminate the amateur elements in the programme, since it was manifestly unfair to put amateur musicians and actors in the same programme as professionals of the highest calibre; and it was equally unfair to the fast-growing audiences, who were uncertain whether to expect a professional or an amateur production.

Every Festival must have a clearly defined purpose if its programme planning is to have any meaning; and the St. Pancras Festival has a three-fold objective :

First, it seeks to interest St. Pancras people in the arts, by presenting music and drama of the highest quality in their own Town Hall, at prices they can reasonably afford.

Secondly, it endeavours to assist societies or groups which have a worthwhile artistic aim but which lack the necessary financial support to put their ideas to the test of public scrutiny.

Thirdly, by reason of the fact that St. Pancras is close to the London centres of music, opera and drama, our programmes are made up of items outside the normal repertoire, in order to avoid duplicating what is already available elsewhere in London.

In each of its three aspects the St. Pancras Festival has been successful. Although its reputation is now such that it draws its audiences from all over London and the Home Counties (indeed it would be impossible to fill the Assembly Hall, which seats a thousand people, night after night for a month entirely from a borough of 130,000 population), nevertheless the impact of the Festival on St. Pancras has been steadily growing over the years, and it has undoubtedly in-

roduced many local citizens, and councillors, to the delights of the arts.

In the work of sponsoring artistic societies the Festival has a number of outstanding successes to its credit. For example, the Handel Opera Society was formed in the early 1950s to revive the neglected operas of Handel and gave its first production, *Deidamia*, on an amateur basis in 1955. In 1957 the Society was invited to make an operatic contribution to the Festival, with financial backing from the Borough Council, and presented *Alcina*, with Joan Sutherland and Monica Sinclair in the cast. *Alcina* is now in the repertoire of the Royal Opera House, and other opera houses in Italy, Sweden and the United States; and the Handel Opera Society is established as one of the major operatic institutions of the country, with its own season at Sadler's Wells each year. In similar fashion other operatic groups have found their feet in the programmes of the Festival, such as Group Eight and the Philopera Circle. The 1965 Festival programme will include the début of another new opera group, Basilica Productions, who will be presenting Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses*. In the field of orchestral music the Polyphonia Orchestra began as an amateur body, and under St. Pancras auspices developed into a professional orchestra of sufficient stature to be asked to give a concert as part of the celebrations of Benjamin Britten's fiftieth birthday. In drama we have assisted young professional companies such as In-Stage and Centre Stage, London with their first full-scale productions.

This policy has also been applied to the visual arts. The exhibition *St. Pancras Artists* has been included in every Festival programme. It is an exhibition of painting and sculpture, restricted to artists, whether professional or amateur, who live, work or study in the borough. But in addition to the main Exhibition, each year we also have a "one-man show," as an exhibition within the main collection; and the honour of the one-man show is given to an artist who has shown for several years in the main Exhibition and who is considered by the Selection Committee to be worthy of the opportunity to display the full range of his work. By this means several promising young professionals have had



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the chance of having their own exhibition, without the expense of hiring one of the commercial galleries.

The third aspect of Festival policy, the constant endeavour to provide interesting programmes of works not normally heard, has led over the years to an impressive list of first performances and revivals. Three operatic composers have figured prominently in our programmes: Verdi, Haydn and Handel, and the following productions were all first British performances, or the first for more than a century:

- Verdi*    *Un Giorno di Regno* (1961)  
          *I Masnadieri* (1962)  
          *Aroldo* (1964)  
*Haydn*    *Orfeo ed Eurydice* (1955)  
          *Il Mondo della Luna* (1960)  
          *L'Infedelta Delusa* (1964)  
*Handel*   *Alcina* (1957)  
          *Theodora* (1958)

Modern opera has not been neglected, and our programmes have included English stage premières of:

- Heinz von Cramer, *The Tide* (1960)  
Darius Milhaud, *The Sorrows of Orpheus* (1960)  
Sven-Erik Beck, *The Crane Feathers* (1962)

Festival orchestral programmes have included the triumphantly successful first public performance in Britain of Mahler's Third Symphony, when more than three hundred people were turned away. Other composers represented by first performances include Rimsky Korsakov, Malcolm Arnold, Hans Werner Henze, Tibor Harsanyi, Gail Kubik and John Jackson.

In the world of the theatre we have had first performances of Saroyan's *The Cave Dwellers*, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* and Muriel Spark's *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*. Even in films, where London has a wide range of specialist cinemas, we were able to produce the first showing in England of the superb Czech colour film *Jan Hus*.

All this adds up to a solid body of achievement of which St. Pancras has the right to be proud; and it has not involved

heavy expenditure. The current net cost of the St. Pancras Festival, after deduction of income from all sources, is under £10,000, representing less than one-fifth of a penny rate; and for this sum St. Pancras gets a four-week programme, including four fully staged professional opera productions, half a dozen concerts, plays, poetry reading, jazz and the visual arts.

The same tri-partite policy is followed throughout the remainder of the year, with the difference that outside the Festival we are also able to assist local amateur groups. Our *total* annual expenditure on the arts, including staff salaries, is under £20,000, or less than one-third of a penny rate.

On March 31st, 1965, St. Pancras will come to the end of its existence as a metropolitan borough and, with Hampstead and Holborn, will form part of the new London Borough of Camden. The next St. Pancras Arts Festival, the eleventh, will therefore probably be the last, at least under that name. It is to be hoped that the new Borough Council of Camden will continue the enlightened and progressive policy followed by successive St. Pancras Councils during the past ten years, and that it will go even further and grasp the greater opportunities which will be presented by the creation of the new borough.

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William Taylor is Borough Librarian of St. Pancras.

## A CIVIC THEATRE PROJECT FOR THE BOROUGH OF HACKNEY

F. BRAMBLE

EARLY in 1963 a group of interested people set out to investigate the possibility of building a civic theatre in the Borough of Hackney. This arose from an awareness of the lack of amenities for the arts in a borough which has in other respects always been conscientious in the provision of social services. Under the Local Government Act of 1948, councils are empowered to raise a sixpenny rate for the provision of a building as a place of entertainment. It is a grave criticism of councils throughout the country, that, with few exceptions, sums from one twenty-fourth to one-sixth of this figure are raised and used for the arts, some councils spending nothing whatsoever over periods of years. At a period of increased spending on housing, schools and roads, it is a criminally shortsighted state of unbalance that cultural amenities do not keep pace with physical amenities. Up to recently it has been assumed perhaps too willingly that mass media provided all that was necessary. But cultural amenities must be considered as an integral part of an expanding educational system. We have been slower than America or Russia to realise the implications of automation. We must start to cater for increased leisure before the full effects occur. It was a consciousness of this disparity of spending and the virtual omission of the arts from civic considerations that motivated the project.

As a result, Councillor B. Cohen, of Hackney, approached Clive Barker, of Centre 42, to discuss the running of this sort of theatre venture. Meetings were held between Cohen, Barker and the author, in which a policy and scheme for a

civic theatre were discussed. Subsequently the author produced rough plans and a model of the proposed theatre, which were shown to a committee. In June 1963, a joint report was issued by the Town Clerk and Borough Engineer, putting forward their recommendations.

In this chapter, the considerations taken into account are discussed, and a type of theatre is described which the author thinks meets the requirements of the borough.

The physical layout of the North London Borough of Hackney is similar to others in London and in cities throughout the country. There is a main artery—in this case running north from the City—which originally formed a coach road from London. The village of Hackney at that time straddled the road. Since the eighteenth century, Hackney has become absorbed in the London sprawl and the road has been built-up along its length, now forming a major road from the City to North London and beyond. Because of its length, this spine to the borough tends to create a linear town with a series of sub-centres but no major centre. The site that was suggested for the project was very restricted but lay beside the Council's swimming baths at one of the recognisable sub-centres created by a road junction and an adjoining square. The square contains an existing grass bowl or small amphitheatre used for band concerts in the summer. The borough is a mixture of residential accommodation and light industry and has a population of many different nationalities.

At present, local entertainment is largely provided by cinemas at various positions along, or accessible from, the main spine road with its bus services. With the merging of the metropolitan boroughs into the new Greater London boroughs, it is becoming increasingly important to try to achieve some feeling of community within areas which are primarily administrative divisions covering large areas and having contiguity as the common factor. Without this feeling of communal participation, entertainment and the arts will more and more become the monopoly of the existing commercial entertainment centres like the West End. Boroughs like Hackney could well lose their intrinsic life and become residential backwaters. The problem of the floating popula-



tion in big cities will increase unless some sort of local ties and responsibilities are formed. Workmen and students from African and Eastern countries can live in conditions of extreme loneliness which have been partially created by the lack of entertainment and social opportunity. The same conditions apply for people of all ages who find it difficult to go out and make their own friendships. The last stage in this process of social death is the decay of the body. The creation of these "dormitory areas" in combination with a floating urban population usually results in a deterioration of housing standards.

Obviously a civic theatre is not going to put this all right by itself. Nor is it intended to stop people having a night out "on the town." It cannot compete with the particular type of glitter of the city centre. But where it can succeed is to provide a "popular" centre with more of the pub or music hall and less of the West End. Again, this does not mean that it should cater for light entertainment only, in the sense we mean light entertainment nowadays. (Shakespeare's comedies are, after all, light entertainment if presented in the right spirit.) "Popular" theatre is a matter of the spirit in which it is put across. A civic theatre should provide an opportunity for local people to discover their talents in congenial local surroundings. It can be "lived in" much more than a commercial theatre that opens and closes with the rise and fall of the curtain. It can provide drama without the mystique of the West End, and make it more accessible to ordinary people. The design, seating arrangements and gilded tradition of the majority of West End theatres is a hangover from the days of court baroque without the merits of comfort West End managements which are trying to pursue a policy closer to the idea of "popular" theatre find themselves inhibited by the confines of an outmoded building. There must be a close marriage of policy and design to achieve a lively, informal and efficient local theatre.

### *The design of the theatre*

The scheme was to produce an informal building providing flexibility of use and allowing full flexibility of staging. The

building would also be used as a cinema, conference hall, dance hall and lecture room.

### *Staging*

At first it was important to decide what staging facilities would be provided. This is closely linked to the policy of who should use the theatre. The theatre was designed to allow medium-sized repertory companies to use it as visiting companies. Equally it was designed so that it could easily be handled by local amateurs. Three types of staging were provided: a standard proscenium arched stage with small apron; a half-round arrangement formed by a stage lift; an Elizabethan stage using the half-round stage in conjunction with two side stage connected to it, one on either side. Apart from these main forms, other arrangements were possible. A fly-tower was not provided in the original scheme, but it was envisaged that this could be added at a later date. A system of sliding rotating screens was proposed to take standard stage "flats" so that scene changing was made as simple as possible.

The stage area, by means of the sliding screen system, could be entirely cleared, and it was this area that could be used as a dance-hall. This seemed a logical way of avoiding the problem of moving banks of seats in the auditorium area. The half-round stage rose up to become a band platform. Because of the commercial usefulness of the stage area as a dance floor it was possible to give a large area to this purpose, giving a fine deep stage with deep wings. If the theatre can be designed so that an alternative financial use can be made of the stage, everything gains by it.

### *Seating*

In order to make the theatre a going financial proposition for a visiting company, a minimum number of 1,000 seats was proposed. These seats had to be arranged in such a manner to fulfil a number of purposes. Informality in the theatre relies a great deal on the amount of communication between the audience and the actors. The half-round fore stage thrusts the actors out into the audience past the barrier of the picture-frame stage. Instead of watching the action

through a hole in the end wall, the audience become on-lookers gathered round an action in their midst. The stage becomes more like an emotional boxing-ring.

The feeling of participation is increased if the number of rows of seats is kept to twenty to twenty-five. Over this range, actors can dispense with many of the stage mannerisms that are required to carry the voice to the gallery and back stalls in a "conventional" theatre. A reduction of "theatricality" is an essential part of modern drama with its lack of grand manner and declamation. To this end, the seats were arranged in a U shape so that the least number of seats would have any visual cut-off when the proscenium stage was used and so that there would at the same time be a sense of enclosure to the half-round stage. The stage lift would have additional seats upon it for proscenium productions. The maximum number of rows from the stage was twenty-one. For Elizabethan productions requiring flowing action through a number of locales, the side stages are formed by trestles. Access to the stage was available from various points in the auditorium as well as from back-stage.

### *The building*

The ideal for this type of building would be to eliminate all defined areas of activity. It would be pleasant if foyer, bar and seats could flow into each other and if the stage could be a cleared area in the same building volume. The interior of the auditorium in the scheme was envisaged as a "big top" so that the structural focus of the interior hovered over the action focus of the fore-stage.

For reasons of cost and because of the limitations of the site, the foyer and bar were positioned beneath the sloping floor of the auditorium and connected directly by stairs. Dressing-room facilities and offices were incorporated in a similar manner. Good dressing-room facilities are an essential part of the design and they should be properly equipped with showers and baths.

Workshops and one or more rehearsal rooms are very necessary for this type of theatre where nearly all scenery will be made on the premises. One of the rehearsal rooms should be

large enough to allow a layout of the stage area. Again from an ideal viewpoint, there should be rooms for amateur film groups and rooms for the making of costumes and a wardrobe. A paint store and scene store must be included. A good projection box is essential. This is not only for cinema use, but for stage projection purposes and lighting control. The use of back-projection and magic-lantern techniques is as much part of the modern theatre as painted sets.

### *Running the theatre*

Apart from the powers mentioned under the Local Government Act of 1948, councils can, under the Physical Training and Recreation Act, 1937, provide a theatre to be used by local bodies and social organisations "having athletic, social or educational objects." By building a theatre which can be used for a diversity of purposes, it should be possible to prevent it lying idle between productions. Film shows and dances should fill the gap, along with visiting groups from other countries. St. Pancras Council run or hire their town hall for a wide variety of performances, ranging from recitals and concerts, to poetry readings and plays. It must be noted, however, that the size of building contemplated here would not have suitable acoustics for a full-scale symphony orchestra. It would be perfectly suitable for jazz concerts and small groups.

The report of the Town Clerk and Borough Engineer of Hackney Council contains this information on the estimates for the Nottingham Civic Theatre project. The budget estimates show "that in a theatre having a capacity of 760 and operating continuously for forty-eight weeks in the year (with forty matinées sponsored by the Education Committee) it should be possible to cover productions and management expenses and leave a small surplus if average audiences of 50 per cent of capacity are achieved. This does not take account of loan charges on either land or buildings, nor building maintenance. It does, however, bring into account the Arts Council grant of £10,000." But it must be remembered that this is the cost of running a full-scale professional repertory company with all actors and producers salaries.



## A CIVIC THEATRE PROJECT FOR HACKNEY

Of the total annual expenses of £59,904 an estimated £27,168 goes to the salaries of actors and other production staff. With 60 per cent house capacity, an estimated surplus of £15,840 per annum would result.

It is not envisaged that the Hackney theatre would have a permanent company. But as can be seen from the estimates above, it is a financial proposition for a visiting company if they can draw a 60 per cent house in a theatre containing 760 seats, and with a fully paid permanent stage staff and management organisation. But it relies on a full use of the theatre over forty-eight weeks of the year.

The costs of several recent theatre projects are given below. No direct comparison can be made as of course the construction of the building must be taken into consideration, but the figures give some idea.

<i>Theatre</i>	<i>Seating</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Birmingham Repertory	900	£500,000
Coventry Belgrade	911	£300,000
Croydon, Ashcroft	738	£450,000
Chichester Festival	1,360	£100,000
Ealing, Questors	460	£74,500
Hampstead Civic	160	£17,000
Nottingham Playhouse	760	£370,000

### *The future*

In conclusion, the point should be made again that the provision of theatre facilities of the type mentioned is not a luxury item to be put off to "some day" when it can be afforded. The Lea Valley scheme is a first imaginative approach to what can be called positive leisure facilities. Within urban areas themselves a centre of the type described should contribute in the same manner.

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## THE FAIRFIELD HALLS

LINDA ROER

IN 1314, King Edward II granted to the Archbishop of Canterbury the right to hold an annual fair in his Manor of Croydon. The natural potential of the site was to have a long history. The grounds of Croydon Fair came to be known as Fairfield, where on the Vigil and Morrow of the Feast of St. Matthew, sheep, cattle and corn were traded and maid-servants and farm labourers hired, an event attracting customers from near and far.

Fairfield gradually became a pleasure fair, increasingly notorious for its rowdy customers who came, it is traditionally believed, from outside Croydon. In 1868, after a particularly savage burst of violence in which some highly respected townspeople were the victims of visiting toughs, Croydon Fair was suppressed.

In 1866 it was Fairfield's fate to be set to work. Bought by the Brighton Railway Company, even in 1933 Southern Railways were using the site for sidings and workshops. In 1934, however, the Croydon Corporation took a step, which, although negative at the time, was destined unwittingly to bring about the rebirth of a recreational centre. Hearing of a plan to build a greyhound racing track on the grounds, which had for too long been the breeding ground of mob misrule, the Corporation itself bought the site from Southern Railways. Over the years of war and economy, Fairfield continued to work, amongst other things as a car-park, but in the meantime came about the crystallisation of a new, yet ancient idea: Croydon's Millenary was approaching and the sense of autonomy and dignity of the Town inspired the ambition to make it a city. In July 1955, the Council decided to restore

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Fairfield to its role of pleasure ground. This time, however, it was to become a centre worthy of an ancient town and civilising in its pleasures. This article will attempt to assess whether this noble intention is succeeding.

In the Croydon area there lives a population of a quarter of a million, a large proportion of whom commute for work and pleasure reasons and who are the main offenders in keeping Croydon a suburb. Similarly, any talent in the realm of entertainment is liable either to be swallowed by the metropolis or overshadowed by its proximity. There were three main centres for the town: the large Davis Theatre, well known for its visiting theatrical companies and orchestras, the Grand Theatre which in spite of its name was the smaller repertory theatre and house of the annual pantomime, and the Civic Hall, which although without a balcony and proscenium arch, had a raked floor for the auditorium making the place convenient for lectures, amateur productions, school speech days and the weekly lunch-time recital. It was frequently proved that there was a large potential in Croydon not only of talent but of audiences, but in the final reckoning it was suburban apathy that helped to lose Croydon the battle to become a city.

It was, therefore, in the face of cynicism that the decision to build the Halls was made. It was to cost about £1,250,000 and to provide a new centre not only for Croydon but for South London and where plays, concerts, exhibitions and social functions would take place. It was to be available for amateur societies as well as visiting artistes. The architects were Messrs. Robert Atkinson and Partners, who had designed the Croydon Technical College nearby and the Halls were opened by the Queen Mother on November 20th, 1962 at a B.B.C. Symphony Concert.

In spite of its twentieth-century austerity, Fairfield Halls are well planned and attractive to the eye. They consist of three main blocks: the Fairfield Concert Hall itself, the Ashcroft Theatre to one side and on the other the Arnhem Gallery. Each in itself serves its purpose adequately and when crowded emanates an atmosphere of bustling enjoyment. But what the old Fairfield possessed the new lacks, namely the ability to satisfy the townspeople's need for informal community enjoy-

ment, a feeling which would convey even to an occasional visitor something of Croydon's personality.

At the entrance is the booking office, behind which glass doors open into a spacious foyer. Along the sides are good cloakrooms and at the end is a self-service buffet. This has the disadvantage of being too much part of the foyer although an attractive wooden screen helps to partition it off. It is in the foyer that the mood is set for the colouring throughout the building, pastel shades and light wooden facings. The buffet is open throughout the day. As eating is an added practical attraction to townspeople to meet and use a building as a matter of course it is a shame the buffet is not warmer in atmosphere. Something may here be learned from the Mermaid Theatre or even from popular coffee-bars. Juke boxes are not necessary but with the Croydon Technical College so near some comfortable chairs, a few intimate corners and a couple of chessboards are. At the moment the buffet resembles a station waiting room, with automatic sales machines along the far wall. An improvement should be made either with the garden decors, attempted already by the appearance of a few pots of shrubs, or by placing more attractive screens or curtains all around.

Sculpture is noticeably lacking throughout the building. It would help greatly in cultivating interest and in establishing familiar landmarks along corridors. To the right of the foyer is the eighty-eight-foot-long Arnhem Gallery. It may be divided by a folding wooden screen and with its adjoining kitchen it can act as banquet hall for 500 people. With its high ceiling and musicians' gallery it resembles slightly a medieval hall, but the decorating in fact shows a singular lack of artistic imagination. For exhibitions the hall is lit excellently by diffused ceiling lights, but the simple lines desirable in an art gallery are marred by an unpleasing mixture of wall colours and unnecessary chandeliers hanging for the benefit of transforming the gallery into a ballroom. The balcony is not used by musicians or anyone else, and the period-style potential of the hall is unexploited. The exhibitions, however, are well housed, although for most of the year the subjects are somewhat limited.



## THE FAIRFIELD HALLS

To the left of the foyer is the Ashcroft Theatre. With its own foyers to stalls and circle the theatre is the most intimate and welcoming unit of the Halls. It seats 734, whilst the upper stalls can be cut off by a folding screen. The stage is adequate with a large scene dock. The apron can be lowered electrically either to floor level or below in order to create an orchestra pit. The theatre may be transformed easily into a cinema or a hall for chamber-music, whilst the acoustics are good and the amplification can be linked with that of the Concert Hall. The repertory includes a mixture of West End pre-runs and local amateur productions, ballet, pantomime, musicals and productions of new plays as a result of competition. Although undeservedly slighted by West End critics, the theatre might nevertheless step into realms a little more adventurous. The finest theatrical achievement in Croydon has been the Pembroke Theatre in the Round, now extinct. It would be a great step towards restoring Croydon's reputation for individuality if the Ashcroft Theatre could refill in some way the present need for experiment.

The Concert Hall, however, is one of the finest in the country. Approached from the foyer by broad steps and corridors similar to those of the Festival Hall, it seats between 1,530 to 1,914 and can be easily adapted for stage performances, cinema shows, lectures and arena events. The acoustics, if slightly hollow sounding at the moment, are being improved. The interior is simple and yet handsome in design. It can boast as its *pièce de résistance* an organ designed by Ralph Downes placed on one side of the platform, with its four departments visibly defined by their location along the left wall.

This hall was built primarily for concerts, but for every concert there is some other form of entertainment on a different night. In September 1964 the Fairfield Hall was used on twenty evenings. Of these only four were orchestral concerts, none of them containing items by a modern composer, although there were the regular Tuesday lunchtime concerts of more specialised appeal which were nevertheless extremely well attended. Five evenings were used for old films, one being of the Bolshoi Ballet. Individual personality artistes, one

being Gracie Fields, used the hall three times, the Band of the Irish Guards once, a demonstration of spiritual healing and a Croydon fashion show once. The last four evenings were regular Tuesday events of international professional wrestling. The price of seats on all occasions was reasonable.

Other aspects of the Halls are the comfortable licensed restaurant, which is open all day and seats one hundred, and the Maple Room, a small, luxurious lounge suitable for board meetings, wedding receptions and gramophone recitals. In spite of its inevitable oblong-box shape, it is the pleasantest room in the building. There are largely unfrequented balconies offering interesting vistas and many very well-frequented bars, though coffee bars supplying concert-goers during intervals are too few and too small.

The guiding hand behind all aspects of the Halls is the energetic General Manager, Mr. T. J. Pyper. He is a highly efficient organiser of entertainment who has dispensed with many of its conventional institutions. Notable amongst these is the absence of paid usherettes whom Mr. Pyper feels lower the tone of an auditorium. He has formed a voluntary corps of stewards many of them professional townspeople who have invited their wives and girl-friends to act as programme sellers, and who have formed an autonomous society well thought of by frequenters of the Halls.

Another innovation has been that Mr. Pyper has dispensed with subordinate house managers of the separate units. Although he relies on a personal assistant, Mr. Laing, and managers of the caretaking and technical sections of the Halls, and holds a meeting every ten days to review the forthcoming programme, he feels no need for organisers in any of the separate fields of entertainment. Although this has the advantage of efficiency, it is surely at this point that the manager must be criticised as well as admired.

If success is a sign of efficiency, Mr. Pyper excels, since although he himself admits that the publicity is amateurish, his motto "A visitor over the threshold is the finest advertisement," has indeed filled the Halls. It needs, however, a manager of great vision to hold higher motives than mere popularity without the stimulus of enthusiastic co-managers. The

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aim of the Council should be not only to appeal to all tastes but to educate them, and at the moment there is little at the Halls that was not to be found, albeit in less glamorous surroundings, when the Davis Theatre was standing. The house manager cannot be a specialist in all aspects of entertainment covered by the Halls, yet it is he who invites the various companies, orchestras and artistes to perform. This means that the assistants who are specialists in their various fields are acting as dogsbodies whilst their powers of initiative are left unexploited. A great improvement could be made for instance in the musical field. The lunch-time concerts of chamber music are crowded enough to indicate that there is a highly developed musical taste in Croydon. While the Festival Hall is closed there must be an enormous market for good music in South London, yet this need is not being met. Nor have the possibilities of professional or amateur chamber music or folk-singing been exploited in the other numerous rooms of the Halls. It is true that amateur groups are charged moderate fees, but if the Fairfield Halls are to be a living centre of all the inhabitants of Croydon, and not just an attraction like a big top, the whole atmosphere must seethe with local people using the halls casually, at a moment's notice and free if needs be. The individual units and their organising should abound with individuality, the corridors and various rooms be given a personal motif and the buffet made as welcoming and popular as possible. Until then the wit and sparkle of Croydon will remain where it is now—in Surrey Street Market.

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## OPERA FOR ALL?

BERNARD KEEFFE

ONE of my most unusual experiences was to hear a performance of *Il Trovatore* in two languages at once. One of them was Bulgarian—hardly surprising as the performance was in Sofia—the other was English, and occasioned by the presence in the cast of Peter Glossop, the young Yorkshire baritone. This was his final test in the International Singing Contest for Opera Singers, and as a result of it Glossop was placed first. This was a shock for the other members of the jury, who clearly shared the view of many Britons that opera was an art beyond the power of the cold Anglo-Saxon. However, his success and that of Geraint Evans, Amy Shuard, David Ward and a host of other distinguished British singers demonstrate that there is no inherent reason why we should not distinguish ourselves in this field. And yet it is difficult.

The commonest assumption is that we have no tradition of opera in the way that Germany and Italy have, but is this true? There has always been opera of a high international standard in London, and in the provinces several touring companies have in the past been able to maintain themselves without subsidy, and to play for as long as eight or more weeks at a time in large cities such as Glasgow and Manchester. This was an achievement virtually unique in the history of opera, which generally consumes astronomical sums of public or private subsidy. In this case one might say that the subsidy was paid out of the artists' own pockets, for they received pitifully small fees. Since the war the pattern has changed—the principle of public subsidy has been accepted and Covent Garden now manages to maintain a topflight standard with financial support which is nevertheless a small



fraction of that enjoyed by its counterparts in Vienna or Paris. Sadler's Wells is helped in a similar way, but also has a local status and receives considerable help from the L.C.C. It also runs with great administrative difficulty a company which sets out with some success to provide opera in the provinces. But is this enough?

One of the glories of our theatrical tradition, greatly envied by the Americans for example was our repertory theatre. This has shrunk since the war, but there are still enough of them for the talented young actor to learn his craft in the only way he can—through performance. These theatres represent the lower layers of a pyramid whose apex is London's West End. There is a similar system in Germany for opera—more than fifty theatres in West Germany alone, where the young singer can try his voice in performance, make mistakes, lose his nerves, gradually acquire the ease and routine of performance that is the stamp of the accomplished singer and actor. In Britain if a young man has been lucky enough to get an engagement, he may have to take his first role on the stage of a metropolitan theatre. He may even have to sing roles unsuited to his voice and perhaps start his career in small character parts, when his voice and temperament suit him to leading lyrical roles. These, of course, he should be singing in the Leeds Municipal Opera House—except that Leeds has a football team, a Museum and Art Gallery, several oratorio choirs, but no opera house. In fact the only two companies outside London (besides Glyndebourne) are based on amateur choruses. The Welsh National Opera plays in Wales and England for a total of about eight weeks; the Scottish Opera has developed over the last three years, and is establishing a fine reputation for its performances in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and possibly other cities in the future. They both enjoy municipal support, and the corporations of Cardiff and Glasgow in particular have done much to help these companies on their way. We tend to do things in an odd way in this country, so perhaps these two enterprises will show the way to a new tradition which will allow the vast reservoir of talent to be tapped, and at the same time satisfy the undoubted hunger for opera that is afflicting so many of us.

Perhaps this will bring home to the educationists that opera is the strongest link between music and the ordinary listener. Whether the local authorities will find more money for it is not so likely. Already few have taken advantage of their right to subsidise the arts through an addition to the rates, and retrenchment has always been the most potent of battle cries in the local elections. A mystery is why so many of them continue to maintain mausoleums they call museums—here is some money that could be put to better use.

None of these things can be done, however, unless the will to action is shown to exist, and I fear so many people are only dimly aware of the interest they have in them waiting to be developed. We need to invest time as well as money in opera in this country; time for our natural talent to express itself more fully, and time for the audience to discover how strongly opera suits its temperament. I will certainly be among the first to journey to Leeds Municipal Opera House—if I can drag myself away from the Surrey County Theatre, or the new production of *The Ring* at the Midland Opera House in Birmingham. Is this such an absurd fantasy?

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Bernard Keffe is a conductor and broadcaster.

## OLD FATHER THAMES

F. A. RIDLEY

"FAREWELL! Great Painter of Mankind! Who reached the noblest point of art, whose pictured morals charm the mind and through the eye convert the heart.

"If genius fire thee, reader stay; if nature touch thee, drop a tear; if neither move thee, turn away, for Hogarth's honoured dust lies here."

The above lines, composed by David Garrick in 1767 in honour of William Hogarth, can still be read in the churchyard in the noble parish church of St. Nicholas in Chiswick, only a stone's throw away from where Old Father Thames at high tide moves on his stately course between Mortlake and Hammersmith; as he moves with deliberate gait towards London Town, the grand climax of his long journey from the distant Cotswolds towards the North Sea into which the Thames estuary eventually flows. The Thames, in particular as it approaches London, is redolent of history, and itself constitutes a rich repository of our Island story. The noble lines quoted above, the moving tribute of one man of genius to another, of the great actor David Garrick to the great artist William Hogarth, represent merely one of the most striking of a whole array of impressive memorials that lie alongside the famous river as it winds upon its devious route through two hundred miles of English meadows. Perhaps, particularly so, we may relevantly add, as it loops between its Surrey and Middlesex banks between Hampton Court and Hammersmith Bridge: a walking distance (for so far, praise be to whom it may concern, no Dr. Beeching has laid his heavy hand upon it!) of some fifteen miles, as the crow flies, or rather as the river winds.

(As is common knowledge, the jurisdiction over the river itself is shared by the Port of London Authority and the Thames Conservancy Board. Whereas, however, the jurisdiction of the old London County Council ended beyond Putney and Hammersmith, where that of the Surrey County Council began. Under the recent London Government Act, the Thames now flows through territory controlled by the new London Administration from next April onwards, right down to Hampton Court. The following paragraphs deal principally with this new London terrain through which Old Father Thames flows with serene impartiality.)

It has often occurred to me as a regular user at weekends of the Thames towpath that it seems a great pity that Londoners are not better acquainted with this fascinating area, history haunted at almost every turn. Whilst for the more materially minded, only think of the tourist industry, of the hypothetical Americans or, perhaps in the not distant future, Common Market visitors eager to exchange dollars and francs for memories, a pastime to which many of our transatlantic cousins are said to be particularly addicted! And where else in England are more memories to be found than by the sylvan banks of the Thames since it first flowed into history some two thousand years ago?

Surely, it is high time that London took some more official notice of the Thames, and did more to make its unrivalled terrain better known to Londoners in general and to passing visitors to our shores? For not only is the need urgent, but this present time is surely specially propitious? For the recent London Government Act has extended the jurisdiction of London many miles further downstream to Richmond and Kingston: both boroughs now officially recognised, for at least electioneering purposes, as "Richmond-upon-Thames" and "Kingston-upon-Thames." One feels tempted to ask, what river were they on before the recent Act was passed into law?

#### *From Hampton Court to Hammersmith Bridge*

The Thames of course is only a London river by Act of Parliament. For it rises far away in the Cotswolds at Lechlade, a place of origin upon which the Thames has conferred



immortality, but has not (as far at least as I know) appeared to have induced people to visit it! As everyone knows, even including Lord Macaulay's omniscient and no doubt mythical schoolboy, Oxford, that traditional "home of lost causes" and "dreaming spires," lies upon the banks of the Thames. Whilst both Oxford and its rival home of less obviously "lost causes," Cambridge, also have an annual date upon Thames-side to which we shall make further reference later on. So also does Windsor Castle, traditional headquarters of the British Monarchy since it moved upstream from Richmond Palace where the first Elizabeth ended her memorable reign. A reign during which, incidentally, Edmund Spenser, the gifted author of the *Faerie Queene*, composed what is perhaps the most celebrated of the many poetic panegyrics addressed to Old Father Thames: "Sweet Thames, run softly ere I end my song," so runs its haunting refrain. But another, and even more famous, Elizabethan bard than was Spenser, none other than William Shakespeare, a riparian dweller on Avon and not on Thames, in his play *King John*, pointedly ignored another very famous historic spot on Thames-side, Runnymede, where in 1215 King John had a reluctant assignment with his rebellious barons. As a result of which, he was with extreme reluctance forced to sign that historic document Magna Carta. But that "foundation stone of English democracy," that "Palladium of English liberty" as liberal historians have so eulogistically described it, was pointedly ignored by the Swan of Avon, not presumably because he regarded the Avon as a rival of the Thames, but rather because the imperious Tudor whom Shakespeare served had little use for democracy, and still less for documents, which like Magna Carta, were dragged by the force of arms of rebellious subjects from reluctant English monarchs. "I am Richard!" as Elizabeth Tudor is said to have remarked when she witnessed on the stage the deposition and subsequent murder of the ill-fated Richard the Second in Shakespeare's play of that name. Nevertheless, Magna Carta has survived the arbitrary rule of the Tudors; and English democracy born at Runnymede was after all originally an authentic product of the Thames.

As we continue to move downstream, we are now approach-

ing London, and are just coming within walking distance of the Metropolis. As we approach nearer and nearer to the capital, English history gathers ever thicker and closer around us. For we pass Hampton Court, where, in the labyrinthine corridors of the Palace, before the advent of the critical Society of Psychical Research, were to be seen or heard at night the regal ghosts of its founder Cardinal Wolsey and its later occupant Dutch William the Third, better known across the Irish Sea as "King Billy of the Boyne." (1690.) Whereas, only a couple of miles further on, we pass another cradle of English democracy, Kingston-upon-Thames, where in the stormy era of the Civil War, Gerard Winstanley, "the first English Socialist" (as he has been termed), and his diminutive band of "Diggers" made the first socialist experiment in England by establishing a communal settlement near Kingston, thus "digging" their way into the records of English history. A bold experiment in which some modern social historians have seen the first overt manifestations of English socialism and the distant prototype of the modern British Labour Movement.

For the stormy era of the English Civil War produced what well may be described as the pioneer manifestations of English democracy in modern times. But at our next stop, Richmond (upon Thames), we are back amongst the kings again! For in Richmond Palace, three renowned English monarchs, Edward III, victor of Crécy (1347), Henry VII, victor of Bosworth Field (1485) and last but the reverse of least, Elizabeth I, the conqueror of the "Invincible Armada" (1588), all looked their last upon the sun, and upon the Thames at Richmond Bridge; and certainly they could scarcely have found a more beautiful place from which to survey for the last time this transitory world. For Richmond commands what are surely two of the most beautiful views in England, the sylvan scene surveyed from Richmond Bridge, and the majestic panorama as viewed from the top of Richmond Hill. At Richmond also in more recent times (early eighteenth century), lived the Scottish poet James Thomson, author of poetry very famous in its own day, entitled *The Seasons*; and also in a very different vein, of that sublime and still

evergreen maritime anthem, *Rule Britannia*, which in the course of time was to expand the navigation of the Thames into a universal maritime empire. (1740. *N.B.*, *Rule Britannia* originally formed part of a now long-forgotten production entitled *Alfred*.) At Twickenham just across the river there also resided a still more famous poet, Alexander Pope, who wrote there his satiric masterpieces, *The Dunciad* and the *Essay on Man*. Another famous wit and man of letters of the era of Pope and Thomson, Horace Walpole also resided there.

*Julius Caesar crossed here*

But that this empire, however, was not the first to include Britain, we are reminded as we resume our pilgrimage; when having passed the world-famous Kew Gardens, we pass between Brentford and Chiswick, the spot at which Julius Caesar in the course of his second flying raid on ancient Britain (54 B.C.) is said to have waded across the Thames at the head of his Roman legions. This, at least, tradition states to have been the precise place, in which connection, we recall the pleasant tale of the schoolboy who recovered from the Thames a Roman coin, which, as he proudly informed all and sundry, definitely proved the presence of Julius Caesar since it bore the authentic date "54 B.C." But this is perhaps part of Thames folklore rather than a scientific contribution to Roman chronology.

At Chiswick Bridge, a modern structure, that, however, leads to areas on Thames-side perhaps the richest of all in historical memories, we enter the immediate vicinity of the Metropolis. For beyond Putney and Hammersmith bridges, where the towpath ends and the Thames embankment begins, Thames-side becomes merged into the complex life of what was, at any rate until recently, the largest and most populous city in the world. Though today Londoners will learn with stupefaction that Japanese and Olympic Tokio now proudly claims the distinction of being the world's largest city, a distinction that London has long taken for granted.

For at Hammersmith Bridge the Thames properly so called may be said to end. But its last few miles are perhaps the most of all richest in historical, ecclesiastical, and literary

age as railways in his future Arcadian Utopia, I too would have walked along with Hammond and company in quest of "Nowhere," walking into the far future by the banks of the Thames in the footsteps of William Morris. For though Morris is a Victorian author little read nowadays, he was a great idealist, a great personality and enjoys the unique distinction of having extended the Thames into a new dimension, Time.

N.B. Since writing this essay, I met an old gentleman near Morris's house who, as a child in 1894, had actually met this famous man, and retains vivid memories of him.

Before finally leaving the Thames at Hammersmith Bridge, since thereafter the Thames, so to speak, ceases to be the Thames and becomes merely one of the sights of London, one must draw attention to certain other dwellers on its banks formerly known to fame. For example, at Barnes across the river, another memorial plaque commemorates the eminent musician Gustav Holst, who formerly resided in a house directly facing the Thames, whereas close to Hammersmith Bridge another contemporary and neighbour of William Morris, Dr. Frederick James Furnivall, still gives his name to Furnivall Gardens and as a pioneer of aquatic sport upon the Thames. It would surely add to the contemporary gaiety of nations in this so drab a technological age, as well as increasing the current amenities of the river, if the "Greater London Council" were to consider reviving the riparian displays of fireworks which in the days of Handel (who wrote music for them) represented one of the attractions of the River Thames for Londoners.

Nor can we leave this topic without mentioning some of the numerous and altogether picturesque hostelries, some of them extremely ancient, to be found at frequent intervals alongside the banks of the Thames. As befits one who sought all his life to revive the "Merrie England" of bygone days, and who directed a powerful social critique against the unethical commercialism and unaesthetic drabness of Victorian England, William Morris most appropriately lived almost opposite one of the most famous and most frequented of these Thames-side hostelries, the "Dove," upon the site of which a succession of



inns have reputedly stood since medieval times. Two neighbouring inns, equally ancient and renowned, are "The Old Ship," directly facing the river, a favourite resort of the famous Nell Gwynne in "Good King Charles's Golden Days," and the "Black Lion," still the favourite "local" of one of our most brilliant and controversial figures, Sir A. P. Herbert, who still lives on Hammersmith Mall, and whose famous novel *The Water Gipsies* has immortalised the adjacent reaches of the river in a modern saga of riverside life.

Nor would even the most cursory account of our "Old Father" be adequate that did not mention the "Feathered Host," the swans, in particular, who, protected by stringent Royal edicts and as the exclusive property of the Crown, frequent the banks of the Thames in such large numbers. Were this year not the anniversary of the "Swan of Avon," one might even be tempted to ask the blasphemous question; what are the swans of other rivers (including the Avon!) as and when compared with those stately birds who so majestically navigate the winding reaches of the Thames! Perhaps William Morris, as he watched them from his windows, may have reflected on how vastly preferable the life of a Victorian swan must have been as compared with that of so many of his human contemporaries sunken amid the squalor of the industrial age, and must have stirred the conscience of the great Utopian to those sharp social criticisms which interperse with an at first sight surprising incongruity the Arcadian idyll of Morris's Utopian romance *News from Nowhere*? Here it might be added that up to a century ago, salmon came up the river at least as far as Richmond, perhaps to Teddington Lock.

### *The Thames and history*

We now approach journey's end. For as noted already, the Thames may be said to end at Hammersmith Bridge where it merges into London. For the more familiar Thames-side sites in London itself which range from Cleopatra's Needle (which had incidentally nothing to do with that "Siren of the Nile") via Westminster Bridge, celebrated by Wordsworth, past the Tower and down to Execution Dock, Wapping, have already

been so extensively written about that it would be as tedious as superfluous to expatiate upon them. At Hammersmith Creek prior to 1929, a harbour still existed at which sailing barges still unloaded. . . .

Consequently for the purposes of this essay, Hammersmith Bridge may be said to mark the dividing line between the Thames which flows through traditional London and the Thames which forms the subject of this essay. We have passed through what is surely, either from the historic or aesthetic points of view, one of the most beautiful and history haunted areas in England. Surely we may again emphasise that more could and should be done to make its beauties better known? And now, surely, in the light of recent legislation, is the time for something to be done. And done soon, to improve the amenities of Thames-side, but let us again insist, without spoiling its rural charm. Now is the time to make both Londoners, as also tourists from all over the world, cognisant, as it is to be feared they are not today, that London is situated, and has been situated at least since Julius Caesar's day, on one of the most beautiful rivers in the world! A still rural river, rich in memories. The next word would surely appear to lie with the newly elected "Greater London Council"?

#### *A final word*

For perhaps the most impressive view of the Thames is that from, say, Richmond or Hammersmith Bridge, after sunset, with the river winding away into the darkness in silence unbroken except for the flight of swans upstream. At such a time and place, the sense of history becomes overpowering, the Present merges into the Past. Old Father Thames flows silently into the mighty Stream of Universal History, into the still vaster river of Time.

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## CANALS AND PEOPLE

DAVID HORSEFALL

THE author traces the growth of canals, indicates the pleasures that may be gained from them, and shows how local authorities may encourage their utilisation.

### *Green fingers*

It is an odd quirk of history that canals, which were principally responsible for the success of the Industrial Revolution and the consequent densely urbanised life of industrial towns, should now be able to provide amenities for the inhabitants of those towns. Contrary to popular belief, canals are not all straight, weedy, and noisome; often in a town, such greenery as naturally remains (as distinct from parks) is by the local canal. It has been said with truth that canals bring green fingers into towns. The reasons for this are easy to see: when first built, waterways were thriving arteries of trade; the arrival of different, though not necessarily more efficient, means of transport caused a desertion of the waterway in many places, with a consequent cessation of industrial growth in its environs. Even where the canal is immediately in a town, and surrounded by industrial scenery of the gloomiest sort, often within a few hundred yards such scenery is left behind by the navigator; along roads and railways, on the other hand, industrialisation persists for many miles. Ribbon development is an all-too-accurate description.

Furthermore, canalside industrial premises, far from being invariably gloomy, often have a charm of their own: warehouses and wharves, locks and the cottages for their keepers, all seem to have been built with a harmony of style that can make a walk along an industrial canal an interesting and

pleasant experience. The calm and solitude, too, of the waterway, and an absence of noisy and dangerous traffic, can make a towpath walk a most useful civic amenity, if it is wisely used. And for those who prefer to sit rather than walk, there is often good fishing to be had even in the heart of a town.

*Boating for pleasure and profit*

But canals offer more than a static scene to please the eye alone; at the present rate that people are taking to the water for recreation, the entire populace could be afloat in a generation! Aquatic sports are as popular inland as on the coast, though the means to pursue them are necessarily somewhat limited. Rivers, especially fully navigable ones, canals, and the enormous reservoirs built to supply the canals, provide the most suitable grounds for inland mariners. Pleasure boating on the canals is growing rapidly as the number of licences issued by British Waterways reveals; and these licences show only the growth of pleasure traffic on the nationalised waterways. Such non-nationalised navigations as the Thames and the Broads carry an enormous and growing number of pleasure boats; the time cannot be far distant when they will become too crowded for them to offer the very qualities sought by those who go boating. Canals, on the other hand, are relatively untapped. Finally, the trade on the canals: this is still fairly considerable (about ten million tons per annum) though at present concentrated on a fairly small number of navigations. But the new canal authority, the British Waterways Board, has shown a more sympathetic attitude to canal traffic than its predecessors. Licensing of canal carrying boats has been introduced, admittedly only on a limited scale at present, but with spectacular results for the firm principally benefiting from it: from a loss on their activities they are now making a handsome profit and increasing their fleet of boats. Therefore a revival of traffic on the canals, especially those accommodating narrow boats, is not impossible. Towns with good canal connections will be able to benefit from this safe, reliable, and unexpectedly speedy means of transport. And, to turn the wheel full circle, there is nothing that pleases the towpath walker more than a pair of gaily



painted narrow boats gently chugging by, deep down in the water (with a cargo of as much coal as eight or ten lorries would be needed to carry).

### *New uses*

This, then, is the picture: a network of waterways, some three thousand miles in extent, largely deserted by the industries they helped to create yet potentially an invaluable system available to serve the needs of commerce and pleasure. How can the community best make use of them?

### *Positive or negative action*

Perhaps before going on to the positive means, it would be as well to deal with a few of the negative suggestions that have been advanced: "fill them in," "turn them into roads," "turn them into car-parks." These and many similar suggestions have been made, yet with very few exceptions, canals have been decreed by expert road engineers to be entirely unsuitable for building roads upon. Their width is too small; they are too winding; and often they serve as a valuable water supply and drainage channel which it would be prohibitively costly to put out of action. Filling in canals has given a good many local authorities headaches. The cost of £50,000 per mile of canal treated seems to be a pretty general figure; perhaps even more. The Nottingham Canal, now abandoned, is proving a far more costly enterprise for the ratepayers of the city than it ever did when it was a used waterway. Many thousands have been spent on the eyesore, and yet eyesore it still remains.

### *Restoration is cheapest*

It is generally true to say that to restore a waterway which has been neglected is by far the cheapest way of treating it. The Stratford Canal, opened by the Queen Mother on July 11th, 1964, is a perfect example of this. The canal, owned for many years by the Great Western Railway, had been so allowed to deteriorate by them and their successors, the British Transport Commission, that the Southern Section, a canal about eleven miles long connecting Stratford with the rest of

the country's waterways, was entirely unnavigable. Warwickshire County Council applied for a Warrant of Abandonment on the grounds that no traffic had passed along the canal for a goodly number of years, and for the reason that they wished to rebuild a roadbridge without having to make provision for the passage of boats. After a good deal of discussion, the National Trust came to the rescue and took a lease on the near-derelict waterway with the aim of restoring it to full navigability. The official estimate for the abandonment of this waterway was about £120,000. This cost was merely essential first-aid treatment, such as culverting and diverting the flow of water. Complete obliteration of the canal, making it perfectly safe, would have cost many thousands more. The entire waterway has been restored to navigability at a cost of £40,000. Voluntary labour has cut the costs, kept enthusiasts happy, enabled temporary occupants of H.M. Prisons to keep their (legitimate) trades in practice, and above all engendered a genuine community spirit and a consequent pride in doing work which is for the good of the community as a whole.

The Festival celebrating the re-opening was attended by more than two hundred boats; there were concerts, ballet performances, and firework displays, from a floating stage, and the whole event was one of the most impressive that Stratford has ever witnessed. The town has recovered a valuable amenity, and as membership lists of the Inland Waterways Association show, the people of Stratford are joining the organisation which spearheaded the fight to save their canal.

Far more use can be made of waterways in planning for the future of towns; the local authority can do an enormous amount of good here, for however enthusiasms may be generated, the future of a waterway can be assured only with the help of those authorities through whose territory it passes. It is significant that the current campaign to save the Kennet and Avon (which is meeting with considerable success) draws much support from the local authorities along its banks. In Coventry, the canal basin in the centre of the town was for a long time under threat of closure. A spectacular Rally of Boats held in it amply demonstrated its potentials, and the

basin has now been incorporated, as a basin, in the Town Plan. Though remote from the sea, Coventry may possess a harbour to rival any other on the inland waterways. Many towns have such stretches of water, adjacent to the main line of the navigation, on which boat stations can flourish to the delight of the user and the beholder. Often when such disused basins are reviewed by the local authority, their sole potential seems to be as a car park; indeed, on the Bucks County Plan the basin at Aylesbury was so shown. Long disused for commercial traffic, it was weed- and mud-filled, deserted and, to be honest, unattractive. The basin was chosen as the site for the National Rally of Boats in 1961. The effect has been electric! The basin now teems with boat life, over a hundred cruisers having moorings there; there is a flourishing hire cruiser business; and trading boats call regularly with cargoes of coal. The basin is also a favourite haunt for the landlubbers of the town on a fine day. Would a car park have graced the town to anything like the same extent? The list could be continued of places where the waterway is becoming increasingly a part of municipal life; where the potentials of a link with the inland waterways of the country have been realised before the link has been lost; and where it has been realised that a facility enabling the voyager to go from the heart of a town to the depths of the country is a precious legacy which must be preserved for all to enjoy. But equally, there are many places in which the canal could have been used but where the local authority, far from encouraging such use, has actively promoted legislation to destroy the navigation. Almost invariably the result has been that the townsfolk have been presented with a useless eyesore, costly to dispose of and dangerous in its declining state (most of the accidents associated with waterways are on disused canals, full of old iron and weeds. Such places fascinate the adventurous youngster, and the absence of boats greatly enhances the chances of a fatality). Constantly Press cuttings arrive at the General Office of the Inland Waterways Association which all tell the same sorry story: disuse and neglect lead to dissatisfaction, higher rates—and accidents. Two prime examples which should be visited by anyone who thinks that

leaving a canal to fester is the best way of disposing of it are Derby and Wisbech; the latter especially. Then, for contrast, go to Aylesbury and Stratford.

### *Lea Valley scheme*

One of the most enlightened pieces of waterway planning to occur in recent years has been the Lea Valley scheme, prepared by the Civic Trust. Though the plan is not complete, in that it does not embrace the whole of the navigable Lea, or any of its important tributary, the Stort, it is a model as far as it goes. The scheme, commissioned by a number of local authorities in the Lea Valley, covers the recreational potentials both of the river and of the ground on each side of it. The plan envisages the creation of an enormous aquatically based playground, serving not only the interests of towns in the Lea Valley, but much of London as well. Boat stations, rowing courses of high standard, sailing ponds, waters suitable for skiing; all these are to be created in the many gravel pits adjacent to the river. Some are to be connected to the main navigation, others are to remain separate as the type of craft for which they are intended are best kept segregated from power boats. Slipways are to be built, both for local boat owners and for those from further afield who may wish to bring their boats by road to this yachtsman's paradise. Fishermen are to be catered for, there will be swimming pools, and paddling pools for the children. But not only are the planned delights watery: there are to be restaurants (one of them straddling the navigation), playing grounds for all kinds of sport, motels, facilities for campers, hikers and picnickers, a centre for participants in road rallies, a weekend village and even a kind of Tivoli Gardens.

The development is spaced out along the river from Waltham Abbey to as far south as Stratford, and it has been carefully planned so that the various types of recreation do not conflict. Centres of population, places of extreme natural beauty or historic interest, and the particular recreational needs of an area have all been taken into account in the plan. But what has been needed to make the scheme even start has been the concerted will of a number of local authorities that



something should be done to utilise a common facility. This type of planning could be carried out along a number of canals—and as stated, canals invariably run close to large towns. The Lea scheme, though now completed, is only at its start; whether it will ever be completed as the planners wish remains to be seen, but its very existence is a triumph. At present, as the amount of leisure time is growing and is likely to increase even further, planning for leisure is essential if a bored and disinterested society is not to result. The troubles of such a society are only too well known. Waterways offer unrivalled facilities for exploiting the free time now becoming abundant, and at the same time tapping the vein of adventure which exists within the sedatest of souls. Local authorities can lead the way in this, and never before has there been a riper time for them to do so.

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## OH, I DO LIKE TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE!

ROGER SHALOM

"Hail, Guest, we ask not what thou art,  
If friend, we greet thee hand and heart;  
If stranger, such no longer be,  
If foe, our love shall conquer thee."

—Inscription on the Pylons, marking the  
Brighton boundary on the London Road.

ANYONE who comes to Brighton for the first time with the image of the town in his mind that the Corporation's Entertainments and Publicity Department broadcasts, might get the strange feeling that there was something about it that he had not quite anticipated. It is not that the expected exotic atmosphere created by such spectacles as the fantastic, rich, nightmarishly vulgar mock Indian palace, the Royal Pavilion, the weekly shows at The Dome (described in the brochures as "extremely popular with the older members of the community"), Magnus Volk's Electric Railway, the Aquarium, the Veteran Car Rally, and the narrow lanes with their picturesque antique-shops, do not impress you with their genteel oldeworldeness. You have the feeling that somehow blended in with this, is the atmosphere that the commercial interests of the town tacitly rely on, the Brighton of fruit-machines, the Palace Pier, the Dodgems, the pubs, the "dirty weekends" in squalid double bedrooms. While loudly proclaiming the unique historical institutions that make Brighton seem more "classy," the town has cause to be grateful that its more earthy pleasures are still well known.

Ever since 1782, when the Prince of Wales, determined to take advantage of the recommended sea air, built the Royal

OH, I DO LIKE TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE!

Pavilion in Brighthelmstone, the town has been a fashionable refuge for those with wallets fat enough and lungs sensitive enough not to stand the noise and smoke of the metropolis forty-eight miles to the north. At the same time, it would be wrong to think of Brighton simply as a colony of City commuters, retired colonels and chic actresses; it is far nearer to being a real town than some of its neighbours are. It does, of course, rely on the tourist season, and in some areas nearly every house is a guest-house; but at the same time there is a local population of 163,000, and another 72,000 in neighbouring Hove, and this provides a good supply of labour and a market, and there are excellent communications links. Local industries include the manufacture of brasswork, brushes, car-bodies, candles and soap, foodstuffs, mineral waters and beer, tents, tinplate, varnish, organs, furniture and clothing. Nearby there is timber and coal, an electric power station, a gas works, and jam, patent food, polish and cosmetic factories. Wages are low; unemployment, especially seasonal, is high; rents are high, and sometimes double normal price in the busy season. But whether or not the local authorities leave the townspeople to the mercy of the sharks, they certainly take care of the holidaymaker and Brighton's reputation on the seaside market.

But we should not be too critical of the fact that, in order to maintain the prosperity of the "town"—whoever that may mean—the Corporation provides a paradise less for the holidaymakers than for the businessmen, large and small, who are waiting to gang up on the happy wanderer and take his year's savings. For these things can never be *completely* avoided in a single town, independently of the general social set-up; and in any case, through no fault of the hoteliers and the hot-dog bandits, there are genuinely interesting local institutions which the Corporation is glad to cultivate. It owns Britain's first electric railway, for instance, built by one Magnus Volk in 1883, and runs it up and down the shingle, a lot more smoothly than it did in the old days when worried cabbies and boatmen used to meet at dead of night to pull up the rails. It now carries over half a million passengers every season, and collects one thousand pounds a year. At one end

of it you find the wild environment of the deserted cliff walks; and at the other, more civilised pleasures like the Dodgems and the Palace Pier. Besides this, the Corporation controls such important battlegrounds and meeting-places as the Dome—scene of many great occasions—the Corn Exchange, and the Pavilion Theatre. It also runs the Brighton Race Ground (there are six meetings a year, thirteen days in all); several swimming pools; and the interesting Regency Exhibition in the Royal Pavilion. There is a large but badly housed municipal Technical College, a library famous for its record section, and plans for a youth centre. The Corporation has been responsible for many impressive enterprises, for which certain sections of the town are very well rewarded.

The town is likely to prosper, too, from the establishment of the new University of Sussex within its administrative domain. Eager for the status that it provides, as well as the opportunity to fill up the empty rooms and get at students' maintenance grants in all the off-season periods, the council has given a lot of aid to the university. What side effects will result from its presence remains to be seen, and the local establishment is watching hard, perhaps a little too hard for good relations to be absolutely safe.

It is a pity that the council closes so many of the local attractions down in the winter (even the pubs shut half an hour earlier!); but what remains is often much cheaper, and has much less of a commercial atmosphere about it. But in spite of everything, there does remain a very pleasant, and very varied, mood about the place; and during the holiday season, the important point to note about it is that when thousands of people converge on to one spot determined to enjoy themselves at all costs, it is difficult not to be infected by their feeling. Perhaps it is this as much as anything else that accounts for Brighton's popularity as a resort.

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Roger Shalom is a student at Brighton, who has taken some interest in its local politics.



## ENGLISH VILLAGE CRAFT AND SHOW TRADITION: THE WINTERSLOW CARNIVAL

NORMAN MAGGS

THE pre-Norman Conquest Anglo-Saxon manor village community, now more than 800 years ago, was built on a poor system of farming in which subsistence was won by sweat and toil from the ground by the people who worked it. The villein or serf held his land on terms of service to the lord of the manor, who was obliged in his turn to oversee the well-being and security of the community. They lived under the constant threat of attack by marauding Danes, and they were often living in isolated situations; consequently the community had to be self-supporting and productive of all its own needs. In such conditions pride of folk craft had its origin. It was necessary even to grow the madder and the woad from which the dyes were extracted to colour the hand-woven cloths of home-carded, home-spun wool, sheared from the village's own sheep. Thus a hard and servile life could be lightened for the villager by the personal satisfaction in seeing the complete useful work of his own hands; and he knew that in doing his craft-task well he not only became entitled to the lawful perquisites but confirmed his place in the community. In addition, life was emphasised in community terms at regular times in the year, when each member's contribution came under the public gaze; and demonstrations of prowess at arms also gave personal confidence.

The Norman Conquest strengthened the feudal system, defining in strict terms the place each person was to take in society. It was a society of lord and villeins, designed to keep the manor communities together and stable. The ordinary people were now safer from sudden attack and the burning

of their fields and houses, so they became more aware of their "bound" status, desiring to express themselves as "free" persons. But until the Black Death decimated the population and enabled an independent yeoman class to appear, the ordinary people's means of expression was confined wholly to the manorial crafts and those commissioned or influenced by the Church. Nevertheless it is true to say that the intrinsic character of village society remained constant down to the close of the nineteenth century or even later; form and nomenclature changed, but basic relationships very little at all. The overwhelming triumph of industrialisation brought all-embracing urbanisation in its wake. But whatever may be said against the subjective or servile nature of village life, psychologists have recognised the value of "folk" craft and art as an antidote to urban de-personalisation. Indeed, it is not difficult to recognise the urges, ingrained by centuries, in the behaviour of the modern full-time town dweller. The man who throws off city suit to dig his garden is tilling his "strip" of medieval times. In following the "do it yourself" cult, decorating and repairing the house he lives in, he is expressing one of the most fundamental of human motives; even "messing about with the car" he is the true descendant of the villager to whom the wagon, cart, or hay-wain was an essential part of living. Unfortunately in these times, he rarely gets the satisfaction of leaving a bit of "immortality" behind him by carving a boss ornament in the parish church, or even dressing a piece of plain stone for a building which is to stand in perpetuity. His wife, though now emancipated far above the status of her even recent village counterpart, rarely has the opportunity of adding a piece of tapestry to the adornment of some public place or see the work of her needle upon the backs of aldermen or priests. The pride of her being able to subject the stronger sex by the virtue of her pies and jams has been largely taken from her by the hermetically sealed tin can and the frozen polythene bag. And the teenager we are told goes wild through the lack of the means of "self expression." It might well be said then that an objective study of our village community background contains a key not only

to getting response to organised municipal entertainment activities, but can make an important social contribution in a field where there is a definite need.

Before describing a Wiltshire village carnival of our own day which is still truly rural and wholly self-organised, it will be interesting to make a short list of country arts and crafts, viewed in the light of modern environment.

First and foremost of interest has been home-produced food. The French taunt that the English don't enjoy their food is not true. It is only that industrialisation has separated the English from the opportunity of enjoying something which has not been mass-produced for the sake of utility and convenience. Competitions for home-made pies, puddings, pastries, jams; even cheeses, sauces and complete meals, etc., should be encouraged. The great argument against this is of course that the "working wife" has not time for it. This should be countered with provisos in the judging; handicapping those with plenty of time against those whose time is limited. Publicity should be given to the advantages in terms of domestic equilibrium which may be obtained by the true home cook—if only she does it now and again.

In the field of sewing, weaving, rugmaking, etc., again high-power commercialisation tends to overshadow the amateur. But the exclusive nature of hand-worked textiles should be emphasised. The modern woman can take a real interest in producing something that will not be referred to as "tatty"; she has these days the advantage of highly developed public libraries, whose facilities should be exploited to the full by municipal organisers. Local traditional styles should be brought to light by research into local history, to capitalise on the human love of *esprit de corps*. Alternatively, the study of "antique" styles has a great appeal. The cult of "antiques" has its roots in the human desire for survival into posterity. One of the compensations the villager had was his awareness of family and continuity, realised in the form of heirlooms handed down; particularly prized were those that had been created by the ancestor's own hand.

The men's part in the foregoing begins of course with garden produce, and it should be said that no housing devel-

opment scheme should fail to take into consideration the provision of ground available for individual working and tenancy. Considering the cost of bought fresh and frozen vegetables, the food bill for a family can be cut to a minimum in this way. Also, together with the housewives' productions at the yearly show, the fruits and vegetables make the most pleasant and appetising array.

The domestic utility or decorative wood- and metal-work, or traditional craft-work of gatemaking, wagon-building or thatching, now appear in another guise as "handicrafts" or "hobbies." These tend to lose the power and appeal of the original if made into a cult. Success in modern photography for instance seems to depend upon the purchase of a great variety of expensive instruments, subjecting the art to the precision engineering of the factory. The true folk art production rarely has the perfection of precision but it has the personal hall-mark of its originator. In like manner, many men performing the same recurring function in a chain of operations leading to a finished product, yearn to be the sole producer of an article. The satisfaction of this desire in the form of municipal competition or exhibition activities must not be compromised by the feeling in the competitor that the ordinary person cannot produce an article which can stand next to the industrially produced one. Above all, the chance for "his light to shine before men" is a fundamental human desire and it is a social necessity to encourage it.

### *The Winterslow Carnival*

Winterslow in Wiltshire is a village off the beaten track, but which covers a large area in community terms. There they hold a yearly carnival and show which is completely self-organised and uses no commercial aids. Its profits go into the school building fund. It truly reflects the ancient tradition and has an Englishness which can appeal to the most hardened sophisticate. In addition to the rural population, they have a core of retired people living in a community of bungalows separate from the main village, and also there are people belonging to a War Department scientific establishment nearby.



The day's proceedings begin with the procession of floats which forms up a mile or so away from the village. The carnival is held on August Bank Holiday Monday, and the fields are standing full of corn, golden and almost ready for harvest. The procession makes its way down country lanes between such fields, and at each corner or gate villagers and children have come out to watch it pass. At last the sound of a brass band is heard—backed, it can be detected, by the sound of bugles, and the ringing of a bell. Then the Beadle, in Dickensian cocked hat and swinging his handbell, comes into view. He feels a bit self-conscious as he shouts "Oyez, Oyez: come to the field of entertainment!"—but is obviously enjoying himself and thinking of the beer-tent ahead. He is followed by the brass band, whose instrumentalists are a cross-section of all ages, and who will probably exchange their brass for stringed instruments for the evening's dancing. Directly behind the band comes the Queen's float. Together with her attendants she is enthroned in a launch belonging to the Sea Scouts troop, mounted on a wagon which normally does farm service and is drawn by a tractor. The Sea Scouts' bugle band and troop march behind. They are to give a gun-carriage handling and marching demonstration later. They are the spiritual descendants of the old English village bowmen. Some of them will enter the Navy as a career. Next, the junior Sunday School. Small, rosy-faced children dressed in colourful bonnets and styles of 150 years ago, they sit in a mobile arbour of blossoms. They are followed by older children on foot. A ten-year-old "Stone Age man," dressed in a whole sheepskin, is accompanied by some "biblical characters" leading a real donkey. There is a "Queen of Hearts," a "Spanish Lady," a "Jack and the Beanstalk." Now necks crane to see the principal floats which are those of the Women's Institute and the Mothers' Union. The W.I. float is a Wedgwood blue vase of some eight feet in height around which, in pure white drapings, the ladies of the Institute take authentic Greek poses. Proportion and presentation are in excellent taste. The Wedgwood blue is deepened by the contrast of the sky, also blue but of a lighter hue. The Mothers' Union are presenting themselves as "Moonrakers." The ladies

are got up in country smocks and slouch hats. They have straws in their hair and their complexions have been heightened to a masculine outdoor tan. With corn cobs in their mouths, properly upside down, they acknowledge the cheers of the bystanders. In their wake a teenage individualist rides on his own creation. He has attached a bed frame and propeller arrangement to an agricultural machine. As it is drawn along by a tractor, the contraption rises into the air and comes back to earth again, carrying the legend "The Flying Bedstead."

The procession enters the field where it makes a circuit about the dais in the middle. The Mayor of Salisbury has agreed to open the carnival. He does so, and then performs the ceremony of crowning the queen. Then the children's individual fancy dress classes are judged. A commentator makes kindly and carefully placed remarks about each entrant over the loudspeaker system. Despite his efforts, however, there are tears from some of the losers. The "Stone Age man" wins a prize and mounts the rostrum to receive it from the Carnival Queen with an air of self-assurance. The "Jack and the Beanstalk" also wins a prize; as he turns to go, he nearly de-crowns the queen and de-hats the Mayor with his beanstalk, carried nonchalantly over his shoulder.

In judging the adults' floats, care has been taken to spread equal awards over a number of different titles. It is therefore possible to award the prize for the "best" to the magnificent "Wedgwood" float of the Women's Institute, but the ladies of the Mothers' Union as "Moonrakers" will not be disappointed to receive the prize for the "most original."

Next, the Carnival Queen starts the marathon cycle race which members from serious cycling clubs in the surrounding districts have been invited to enter. The competitors make a colourful circuit of the field and are off on the four-hour race.

This is the signal for the entertainments programme to begin, and for the public to view the Flower, Horticultural and Crafts Show, the sideshows, competitions, and spectacles. An Archery Club has come to give a display, and the Sea Scouts get ready their gun-carriage. And for all that the gun which

the boys handle weights three tons, and fires blanks with an imposing bang, the archers' arrows fly with an ominous, hardly audible hiss, and target with an amazing accuracy which induces a great respect in the beholder, as it had done for centuries gone.

In the Flower Show marquee, the visitor is immediately impressed by the quality of the exhibits. Down one whole side of the long tent, the flower arrangement classes are set out and are without exception of Chelsea standard. In the vegetable and fruit classes luscious products have an aroma quite different from their processed counterparts, and the appetite is straightway whetted, and no less so when proceeding to the tarts, flans, and pies of the cookery section. The crafts reflect modern urban influence to a great extent, but here and there pure tradition has come through.

The school has a show tent all to itself, and the exhibition of children's work has that special spontaneity of youth. This year there is added a small show of Russian schoolbooks, for the village schoolmaster has just done a tour of Soviet schools and institutions.

The Ale Tent is in good swing and perspiring organisers repair often to it for the work of making the carnival a success is an arduous but satisfying one.

In the great Tea Marquee, gallons of the great English brew are being drunk, with cream cakes and bath buns and sandwiches. A noble team merrily washes up a never-ending stream of used cups and plates. All the time, the band provides a musical background to the proceedings, and at the end of the field, on the greasy horizontal pole, Sea Scouts and lads and lasses of the village work out their remaining energies by belabouring each other with pillows. Donkey and pony rides go on, and the car manœuvring tests are worked through.

At last the imminent return of the cyclists is announced, and soon the winner is cheered in. Prizes for the many successful entrants in the flower, horticultural and handicraft classes are presented, and for the children's sports and competitions that have taken place during the day. Finally, the Tea Tent serves hot dogs and onions, and afterwards people make their

way home and to the village hall for the dancing to their own band.

There is nothing very extraordinary about the content of the Winterslow carnival day. It is the fact that it is totally the expression of the individual and the community which gives it its special appeal. As such, it is worthy of note.

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Norman Maggs was originally trained in the scientific field with a view to medical research. Views sociology as an art rather than a science. At present writing his first sociological novel.



## AN ANGLO-WELSH EISTEDDFOD?

FRANK WARD

WELSH nationalism as a demand for a separate state is not a compelling force in the life of Wales, but whether you are a native or an Englishman in Wales, it is impossible not to be aware of a national identity. Whether it is the Welsh accent of characters on radio and television, or in items tucked away in corners of newspapers, of Welsh nationalists doing badly, of an impassioned speech on hill farming, of the start of a Welsh language class and its success or lack of response, of a petition to stop an "English" water reservoir plan, or of the success of the Welsh rugby team. If all these bestir only a small fraction (except for sport) of the population, they are nevertheless part of the background consciousness of being different—non-English—of being Welsh.

Of all the factors which help to maintain this consciousness of Welshness one of the most important has been the National Eisteddfod of Wales. Each alternate year North and then South Wales is the scene of a four-day festival of music and literature. Its aim is to encourage by contests, the music, mainly vocal, poetry and general literature in the Welsh language. The emphasis is so strong on the Welsh language that no use is permitted of English even though many competitors must learn their set pieces parrot fashion in what to them is a foreign tongue. The tradition of an extended "sitting" or "session" of bards and musicians appears in Welsh records perhaps as far back as the fourth century but references to their importance become frequent after the twelfth. Even after Edward conquered Wales the tradition continued with, however, a lengthy break in the eighteenth century. Its revival (with the addition of some bogus ceremony

and procedure) came during an economic transformation which also removed the Welsh language from the daily use of the majority of the inhabitants of Wales. Today Welsh-speaking Welshmen are only a quarter of the population and the proportion is still shrinking. Even among the remaining quarter the use of anglicised words and expressions is removing the literary and cultural language even further from its living form. Despite this the National Eisteddfod still holds firmly to its rule that only the Welsh language in its traditional form shall be used (broken only to obtain the patronage of Royalty). The evidence accumulates that the prospect of a revival of the Welsh language is remote. Nevertheless the continued existence of a separate Welsh tongue for some considerable period in the future is certain and is still a very real factor even amongst non-Welsh speakers that makes them conscious of their different regional character.

Everything points to a continuance of the present balance between minority nationalism, language and regional consciousness. And yet for the cultural life of any community to be imprisoned within a minority language is not only a tragedy for the minority but also for the majority who find themselves facing the cosmopolitan culture of the world without the firm base of their own national literature, music and art. The main need is for a sustained and deliberately fostered growth of Anglo-Welsh (English language) literature, theatre and art.

A planned and conscious use of public funds on a scale necessary both to introduce the best of world civilisation, whether it be the Bolshoi Ballet, the Hamburg State Opera, or international soloists to set the standard, and for the full support and encouragement of the Anglo-Welsh response, would require the widespread and enthusiastic support of all local authorities and central agencies. On this basis, and with three-quarters of the country now English speaking, an Anglo-Welsh Eisteddfod could become a reality. The Welsh Eisteddfod as the central vehicle of minority culture has by its own accumulated know-how and financial experience been able to sustain itself. Only a small proportion of its funds are dependent upon donations from local authorities. Each year the

complaints from totally English-speaking areas at the all-Welsh rule lead to opposition to generous grants. Perhaps it has been unavoidable for the protection of the Welsh language that the Eisteddfod maintained itself over the last hundred years as a non-democratic, self-perpetuating hierarchy based on the election of winners of Bardic chairs. It has kept itself outside the control of the English-speaking majority of the nation. Such a system, even though once historically necessary, may eventually become self-defeating.

Any serious change in attitudes, particularly the development of an Anglo-Welsh literature, now waits for a further step in the rationalisation of local government. Whether there is a single regional authority for the whole of Wales or two authorities for North and South with strong joint committees for combined attention to all-Wales problems will be an inevitable part of future discussions. Again whether reorganisation involves a second tier based on the present county, borough authorities or on a new constituency basis with direct election is of some, but not decisive importance. It is sufficient to emphasise that no broad cultural impetus backed by adequate financial support can spring from any *ad hoc* self-appointed body or from the multiplicity of local authorities as they are today.

Democratic regional authorities are going to be essential for the many problems of planning. They will be no less essential for a variegated, widespread and flourishing cultural life.

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Frank Ward is the manager of a weekly newspaper.

## THE GREENWOOD MEN OF NOTTINGHAM

BERNARD DIX

A MENTION of Nottingham sends the mind skipping back to childhood story books and their tales of Robin Hood and his merry band of marauders from the Greenwood. But Nottingham 1964 has a new band of Greenwood men—the employees of the city's Parks Department. Theirs is the job of bringing the touch of nature's greenery to the very front doorsteps of this busy industrial centre.

The visitor entering Nottingham is immediately aware of the handiwork of the parks department employees. Neat ribbons of precisely mown grass flank the kerbsides. Well-shaped trees of amazing variety line the streets and boulevards. Carefully sited road islands split the hurrying traffic stream with an eye-catching blaze of flower-bed colour.

By drawing these green-fingered lines through the streets, Nottingham brings daily pleasure to those who pass by. The whole city has a front garden consisting of some eighty-one acres of grass verges, seventy-five traffic island flower beds and nearly 10,000 trees—and all of it in the streets.

The street-side gardening is only one of the activities of Nottingham Parks Department, it also provides outlets for the energetic sporting types who live in the city. The catalogue of principal features makes impressive reading: sixty-nine football pitches, sixty-six cricket pitches, 114 tennis courts and thirty-two bowling greens. These are the regular features, but Nottingham also finds room for the minority pursuits. The city boasts, for example, that it possesses what are probably the only municipally owned baseball pitches in the country. Survivors of the war-time years when Nottingham provided hospitality to many American servicemen, the three baseball



pitches in the city's parks are occupied every weekend of the season by hard-throwing, ball-slogging enthusiasts—their knee pants and long peaked caps seeming just a little out of place in a city so very much English as Nottingham. Another unusual sporting activity for an English park is Gaelic football, and here again Nottingham provides the facilities for its devotees.

Nottingham is by no means content to take the easy way out by providing space for games to be played and leaving it at that. In conjunction with various sporting organisations it provides expert coaching in tennis and cricket. At the Clifton Playing Fields a covered games area provides the opportunities for clubs to give all-the-year-round coaching and training in a wide variety of sports including netball, badminton, skiing and golf. So effective is this indoor games centre that it remained in full use even during the long hard winter months of 1963 when the ground outside was frozen concrete hard.

The pride of many a Nottingham sportsman is the new Harvey Haddon Stadium which is rapidly attracting top-line athletic and cycling events and which is in daily use for training purposes.

Some local authorities complain that when facilities for recreational and leisure-time activities are provided they remain unused; the experiences of Nottingham produce contrary evidence. For example, each year some 4,500 organised games of football and some 2,700 games of cricket are played on pitches in the parks. Add to these the hours of pleasure involved in the 85,000 tickets issued for bowls, or the 13,000 tickets for golf—not to mention fishing, boating, volleyball, netball and even croquet—and you will get some idea of the good use to which the people of Nottingham put their parks.

What cannot be measured in any statistical terms is the pleasure which many people get from just enjoying the open air in the pleasant surroundings of the parks, ranging from the well-cared-for formality of flower beds set alongside neat gravel paths to the rolling rugged spaces of Wollaton Park where a herd of deer roam under the watchful eye of a horse-mounted park patrol.

For the very young there is boundless enjoyment in the

thirty-nine children's playgrounds dotted in convenient places throughout the city. Some are within the larger parks and open spaces, but many are islands of happiness alongside housing estates or blocks of flats.

Nottingham does not forget the stay-at-home gardener. The Parks Department, in conjunction with the Education Committee, provides horticultural education in the city. At the department's headquarters at Woodthorpe Grange a model kitchen garden, complete with an apiary, shows householders how professional gardeners and beekeepers go about their business. Practical demonstrations are given to visitors inspecting the garden and evening classes are held throughout the summer months. In one year more than 1,700 people attended the lectures and demonstrations arranged by the department. Equally important from the point of view of the mildly enthusiastic household gardener grappling with the problems of do-it-yourself growing, the department gives expert advice on any gardening topic—free of charge. During the year countless thousands of Nottingham residents use this advice service.

The man responsible for all of these services is Nottingham's Director of Parks, Mr. R. O. Stanion. Behind him is a staff of nearly 500, most of them members of the National Union of Public Employees—an organisation which has a keen interest in developing parks and recreational facilities as well as protecting the interests of the men who work in them.

The annual budget of Nottingham's Parks Department is in excess of £300,000 a year—equivalent to a 5½d. rate. But this is a very small price to pay for the first-rate facilities which the new-style Greenwood men provide for the citizens of Nottingham 1964.

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Bernard Dix is a research officer of the National Union of Public Employees.

## THE FUNCTION OF THE FREE LIBRARY

BERYL DEANE

THE free public lending library has been part of the municipal scene since the spread of literacy with compulsory primary education. Its early founders and pioneers had many visions and dreams, of education, self-help and entertainment, and in all these directions the modern public library has expanded and pushed out exploring feelers.

The purpose of libraries is a subject of constant discussion amongst librarians, councillors and ratepayers. Certainly the most obviously good value for the ratepayer's money is adequate provision of books for education and improvement of the mind. But the vast majority of the public read for relaxation and recreation—are they then not entitled to their books on hobbies, their detective and love stories? This is a debate which may well go unresolved whilst libraries do not have sufficient money to provide adequately for these two poles of interest.

Liverpool libraries, however, have with imagination and farsightedness managed to develop a service which fills, both in the city and the region, a role as significant as any in the cultural, social and industrial life of the city.

### *Re-building*

During the war the central Brown Library suffered extensive damage and re-opened with much of its stock stored in tea-chests in the labyrinthine ruins of the old building. Access to the books was entirely closed and students stood patiently at the issue desk while assistants disappeared, for

hours as it seemed, rummaging and delving for requested books.

To walk into the Brown Library now is to enter a world of light, colour and activity; an atmosphere of stimulus and quiet study, of well-known interests and new delightful discoveries.

No light here is hidden under a bushel! Every corridor, passage and entrance hall has its exhibition—music, pictures, history, current events lead the eye and the mind on to the specialist libraries which house the books which, we now realise for the first time, we want to read.

Inside these libraries imaginative shelving helps towards the most satisfying use of the books. The Dewey Decimal System, sacrosanct for so many years, comes in for some cavalier treatment; but the magnificent catalogues of the Liverpool Public Library, nationally recognised, keep flexibility from becoming chaos.

### *Special services*

In the International and the Commonwealth Libraries, countries are treated as entities. Their history, geography and literature are grouped together, frequently in an alcove with a map, a table or two, some pictures. In this way a country—say Australia—about which we may never have had two coherent thoughts in our lives, can be made to leap to life, peopled and landscaped. This is itself a satisfying and informative experience.

The American Library, with exhibitions on American personalities and events whilst they are still in the news, is a valuable counter-weight in this way to the telepicture of America which flickers through the living rooms of Liverpool each evening.

This policy of *presenting* books to the public, rather than shelving them and then guarding them like dragons, is the bridge, in my opinion, between the two schools of giving the public "what it wants" and "what it ought to have." The function of books (and of libraries as the main source of books for the average citizen) is to open up new fields of



interest and imagination, to lead, to enlarge our horizon and to make people aware of the world we live in.

### *Service to industry*

At the same time, however, information of no interest to any but the expert must be provided by public libraries. And here, too, presentation and persuasion are brought into play to encourage the use of the facilities offered.

Liverpool's L.A.D.S.I.R.L.A.C. (Liverpool and District Scientific Industrial and Research Library Advisory Council) and its D.S.I.R. services (Department Scientific and Industrial Research) are not left to languish unsung behind the library doors. An advisory expert will visit any firm, especially small firms, with information and assistance. They can put at their disposal research from all over the country, and the world.

The fees for participation in this scheme vary from 100 guineas to 30s.

This service is forward-looking and farsighted in an area of fluctuating industrial fortune such as Merseyside, and is a generous provision inasmuch as it provides facilities for the whole region, far beyond the boundary of the city.

Hand in hand with this goes the development of the Technical Library, with its Technical Documents Unit which offers the public thousands of current technical periodicals, including the British, United States and European Atomic Energy Authorities, and British, American and German standards, etc. Back issues are available on open access in the Technical Serials Unit.

Liverpool as a port and centre of commerce needs the library too and the Commercial and Social Sciences Library provides facilities for the commercial sections of the city. Here it is that the librarian in a technical sense comes into his own, for special indexes and catalogues guide the enquirer through the mazes of trade names (over 40,000 not available anywhere else), commodity prices, statistics, legal decisions and much else, essential to commerce but Greek to the ordinary citizen. The Patents Library is another long established, but now greatly expanded, source of information for commerce and industry.

Record Office and the Local History Library hold the history of Liverpool—and a tumultuous and changing one it has been—in the form of personal and business documents, prints, maps, lantern slides and films and a library of newspapers, both actual copies and microfilm cards with 100 pages of text to each card. *The Times* from 1785 is yours for the asking in the Microfilm Unit, along with Government publications of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and contemporary documents and reports.

The International Library provides an advisory service on translations much used by commercial and business interests in the city, but its scope is far more wide reaching than this. Here can be found books in every European language, and an almost comprehensive collection of books in African and Asian languages and dialects, too.

These books are grouped on the same principle as the Commonwealth Library, the literature of each country being shelved with books on all the multifarious aspects of that country.

Books unobtainable in English are here for the student in their original language; many quite unobtainable in Britain before can be yours now for the price of a library ticket. Books and periodicals from Eastern Europe are a special field well covered by the International Library which has arrangements for the exchange of books directly with libraries in Russia: a chink in the Iron Curtain.

### *Art and music*

Many cities have music libraries, and Liverpool is no exception. Rare editions and old sheet music and gramophone records are available. Liverpool's thriving music hall past is celebrated in many songs in the library's possession including "*The Free Library Quadrille, Composed and Respectfully Dedicated by Permission of William Brown, Esq.*" On the cover of this is a picture of the frontage of the library, which has not changed externally very much at all, though the Victorian Gothic now encloses the most modern of interiors.

Art books, once the most keenly guarded of all books,

are now on open access—about 20,000 of them. Periodicals and lantern slides made up into subject groups are available to schools, clubs, etc., as well as the individual borrower.

The Print Collection is extensive and includes works of Goya, Van Dyck, Picasso, Matisse and others and is the source of constantly changing exhibitions in the Print Gallery.

## *Rare books*

One of the oldest functions of a library is the preservation of rare books. In one of the few rooms closed to the public the Hornby Library houses 8,000 rare books—incunabula, first editions and fine bindings.

A simple request will produce letters in the handwriting of Nelson, Byron, Gladstone, Verdi and many more, including most of the Kings of England.

## *Branch libraries*

Like all large industrial cities Liverpool consists of a largely non-residential centre, established suburbs and large estates of new municipal housing and flats. These last are frequently deserts of houses, some shops and magnificent paper plans for community centres and cultural foci. It is in these areas especially that the branch libraries are expanding and provide much more than a place to keep books.

In co-ordination with schools and youth clubs they arrange film shows, debates and quizzes, linked where possible to project work in schools and hobbies in the clubs.

For the adults there are musical evenings and lectures with films or film-strips. Gardening, photography and other general interest subjects are dealt with by experts and book displays and lists are available.

In a sense the branch libraries reproduce on the outskirts of the city some of the facilities of the Brown Library in the centre.

All branch libraries have "Story Hours" for the children, when the assistants read poetry or stories, supervise plays and quizzes and generally make books live.

*Central junior library*

Here again the emphasis is upon providing a rich store of books and giving assistance to other organisations helping children in the city.

It houses 20,000 volumes covering all works suitable for young people, standard and modern. It has books on Scouting and books in foreign languages, sets of plays and a Homework Section laid out to enable the child from the overcrowded home to do his homework with reference books at his elbow.

Teachers and youth leaders can come each month and see all the newly published books of value to children. Long-term loans are made to school libraries, and there is a conference room, seating fifty, a large enough number for a children's talk or film.

*Conclusion*

The function of the library as an expanding and initiating force in the social life of a city, and as a tool of industry and commerce, is being realised vividly in Liverpool, and their library service is one of which citizens of Liverpool can be justly proud.

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Beryl Deane is a graduate of Liverpool University, and has worked both as a librarian and teacher in Liverpool.



## SUNDERLAND: A PEOPLE'S THEATRE

D. A. NICHOLAS JONES

WHEN London journalists write of the dreary provinces, they usually concentrate on the lack of expensive evening entertainment, "night-spots," a "decent" meal, theatres. This is tiresome. People who take the theatre seriously don't like to see it in this list of upper-class amenities. For it is of course true that most people, even in London, don't go to the theatre (except to Pop centres like the Whitehall) any more than they go to Claridges. It is a matter of class rather than geography.

Yet it is possible for a theatre building to be the centre of a town's life, to be a people's theatre, used and valued by a great majority. That doesn't mean everybody crowding in and screaming for the publicised admass show; it means people in every economic group developing their own taste, being able to choose what they really want, when they know. Now, when this happens, as it is happening in Sunderland, that does not mean the backward provinces are creeping up to London's standard; it means a new and hopeful development in British life, a situation in which we are no longer divided, like a pile of old newspapers, into the Pop and the Quality.

Sunderland has a strong public sector and a Socialist attitude to the public services. People who use the corporation buses and the civic theatre are not thought of merely as ticket-buyers, but as travellers or audiences with certain wants and needs. The authority takes trouble to find out what people want, and employs enthusiastic experts to encourage them to ask for what is new and better.

The Empire Theatre fell into the council's lap in 1959. Councillor Len Harper, the Theatre Committee's chairman,

recalls that it wasn't really a policy decision. It was a sentimental outcry from the public: don't let our theatre die. "At first we didn't know what to do about it." What they did was to act like Socialists. They bought the building with war damage money and eventually decided to treat it as public property for everybody to use, to spend money on it just as every council spends for its libraries, providing both what people need—ambitious, creative work of high standard—and what they say they want. "No one expects a public library to make a profit," says the theatre's director, Reginald Birks. "Why should a public theatre?" This theatre is on the rates, like the slaughterhouse and the dust collection. It gets an annual subsidy of over £30,000.

It is claimed locally that this is the only true civic theatre in the country. The public sector accepts responsibility for it. There is genuine co-operation. All council departments are involved in the theatre's achievement. While I was talking to the manager recently, a leak in a pipe was reported. Simple. You ring up the Public Works department. The libraries sell theatre tickets; corporation buses run to the audience's convenience; schools supply the crowd scenes for *Julius Caesar*.

On the Saturday morning when I called, the building was full of people. The restaurant in the old "circle lounge" was being laid out for 100 wedding guests. The coffee bar was full too. People amble in and out, maybe to see an art exhibition, maybe as members of the 1,000-strong theatre society, or the 3,000-strong junior branch. Some had come for the news and documentary cinema they were running in the mornings—genuinely by popular request, for the holidays. There were no week-day stage shows during July and August, but the council had put on a season of films rarely seen in commercial cinemas—Olivier's *Hamlet*, Chabrol's *Ophelia*.

Chairman Harper says, "Too many councils bend to what they think is public opinion, rather than believe they're right and convert others. We've converted our ratepayers. A Socialist authority can't allow people's leisure-time pursuits to be exploited by the gangsters of this world." Leisure is more than not-working. With every new public enterprise, the

Town Hall becomes the heart of Sunderland at work; and the theatre becomes the heart of Sunderland at leisure.

Director Birks says: "We can go on blaming commercial managements until we're blue in the face. Certainly they only provide theatre for the privileged few, but that's because they *are* commercial enterprises. Since theatre is not available to most people, it must be the responsibility of the State and of local authorities." He is fortunate to work for a council that shares his beliefs. But he holds that in any council, "you have people who know the value of tools and technical skill. They can run a civic theatre if they get the right sort of man. The profession's got to provide him. A layman, chief librarian or director of education, can't be expected to run a theatre."

The manager, Mr. Cotton, showed me round the building. A young local man, he was at one time employed here by Moss Empires. "When I came back here, I didn't appreciate what they'd done. One old manager used to say that all they want in Sunderland is football, booze and fornication. Well, now he'd have to add culture."

Cotton himself happens to like Spanish dancing, and he was looking forward to a rare provincial appearance by Manuela Vergas's flamenco company. He didn't expect this to fill the theatre every night; not everyone likes it, and the theatre seats over 2,000. But the gallery and the back of the stalls can be curtained off, so that the theatre feels smaller and more intimate for Sunderland's minority of flamenco fanciers. It won't be a fashionable minority, just people who happen to like Spanish dancing; pensioners will pay less than others.

Chairman Harper, who is a radical person, hopes to see free admission in this theatre one day. He also feels like scrapping the whole building, and constructing a more modern theatre. I suspect that manager Cotton shares my perhaps sentimental attraction to the theatre as it stands. Vesta Tilley opened it in 1906; it has Greekish plaster heads and boxes and stagey stairways. It was one of the first theatres to be built without sight-blocking pillars. I should have thought the building could be maintained and developed, making the stage and auditorium more flexible. (Already they can add an apron

stage, which they have used for Dylan Thomas's *Doctor and the Devils*.) Maybe this is sheer sentimentality, but I even like the pink and blue colour scheme which, says Cotton bitterly, "some journalist compared to an Oriental brothel. We wrote and told him we hadn't enough brothel experience to confirm the comparison."

In September the theatre offers Gerry and the Pacemakers on a one-night stand, followed by the Ballet Rambert for a week. Then comes the celebrated modern-dress *Julius Caesar* by the National Youth Theatre company. Sunderland only needs the fifteen principal actors; the town will provide the crowd scenes from seventy-five of its own young actors. This is good because, as Birks says, "The exciting part of this production is the crowd scenes. We have a junior theatre group here with 3,000 members. We can break down the barrier between amateur and professional performers." These juniors are presenting two plays themselves in October.

Birks went on: "We had a show here from Russia. It was breathtaking. All those singers and dancers would have been stars in any English theatre. They had that complete sureness but modesty—something the Beatles have got, something you get from folk-singers. But very few people in Britain had the opportunity to see these Russians. They were 'amateurs'—and everyone runs away from amateurs. (Then there's always the political thing. It was embarrassing the way they were watched.) Now our young people can be creative in the same way. We have folk-music, then we shall have the spoken word, then drama. The young people will create their own stars. They don't want youth leaders—though they do need people with knowledge of the arts."

Sunderland has brought the young people in. Quite shamelessly they have booked Cliff Richard, Helen Shapiro, beat shows. ("Very good audiences. No extraordinary behaviour.") This theatre keeps open house; people are urged in and nobody's hurried out. "People have been deprived too long in the north-east," says Birks. "They've had no opportunity to see good straight theatre. You can't just plonk them down without any knowledge, without any trained appreciation. They'll be embarrassed, and sixteen to seventeen is an embar-



raising enough age anyway. They need to see first-class theatre, not once a year but twice a month."

Birks says the local youngsters know about ballet, because of the education department's past work, but not enough about drama. Theatre has for so long been the smart, social thing, he says, that now it's difficult to get the non-smart to come in. Sunderland has now twice run a north-eastern drama festival, cast, directed and rehearsed on the premises, with Shaw and Shakespeare. Joseph O'Connor has directed for them and scored a considerable success with his own play, *The Lion Trap*. They have had some offbeat plays from the ambitious Margate Stage Company.

But note that this winter they are also presenting their own pantomime, with Jewell and Warriss, and also two antique musical comedies, *No No Nanette* and *The Student Prince*. These items will be quite repulsive both to determined highbrows and to the world of With-it and Pop. Yet it's obvious that there are a good number of people, probably drawing old age pensions, who would like nothing better. It is their theatre too. These entertainments are presented without the shamefaced grin of a commercial management—"Got to get the peasants in somehow, old boy. That's where the money is these days"—but with total confidence in a public service properly done. Sunderland offers both the very familiar (Handel's *Messiah*) and the new and strange (*Black Nativity*).

Birks remarked: "The highbrows used to say 'Royal Ballet one week. Frankie Vaughan the next? How can you get an audience?' We've beaten them down now." A public theatre doesn't have the problem of a commercial enterprise, searching for financial stability by securing "an audience" or "a readership," to be thought of in terms of social and economic classes. Thus, say, the *Sunday Express* claims a "readership" of people who hope to buy a second car! It is possible to define the "audience" for a West End theatre in exactly the same crude way, thinking not of people's natural or potential feeling for art and entertainment, but of their income and their social ambition.

I remarked to Birks that even in Nottingham's beautiful new public theatre (perhaps *because* of its ambitious repertoire

of straight plays of high standard) I had the impression that many of the audience were performing a kind of class ritual. People in the theatre bar had been dressed in a specially classy way; they talked and posed and ordered drinks as if they were on trial for membership of some exclusive club, with the motto: "Top People go to the play."

"I know what you mean," said Birks. "All the same, I would very much like to do the plays Nottingham does. It's the sort of thing *I* like best." But as everybody knows—it is the basic principle of Wesker's and Joan Littlewood's campaigns—most working-class people feel that they are not the right type to go to a theatre to see *Coriolanus* or even a new Ustinov. As Birks puts it, "they've been deprived too long." The merit of the Sunderland approach is that it gets people inside the building. The theatre becomes a familiar environment, like the library but more exciting, not a temple of smartness. Nevertheless Birks envies the Nottingham company's policy. They can do these ambitious, unfamiliar plays, he believes, because there is another live theatre in the town for touring companies.

But in Sunderland, with only one theatre, the policy is to make the theatre serve two purposes, as a production theatre and a touring theatre. This is a controversial matter. There are plenty of people nowadays who believe that the days of touring companies are over and that the provinces are better off without them. They admire those provincial rep companies which present vigorous Shakespeare for lively young audiences. (Though sometimes we wonder: students and imitation students? a new kind of smart set?) Obviously these reps are good. But Sunderland wants the best of all kinds. A local rep can't do a beat show, *How to Succeed*, grand opera, *Black Nativity* and a low-down star-studded pantomime. "All right," say the theatregoers, "we'll go to the rep and you lot can go to the clubs, see Diana Dors and all that's earthy." That's not quite good enough. We're back to the Pop and Quality division.

What Sunderland has in mind is to try to develop touring again, through a civic theatre circuit over the whole country. New touring rep companies can be created for this circuit.

Birks and Harper have been visiting the various civic theatres in the country, and they have been the mainspring of the National Council for Civic Theatres, a body which they evidently hope will spread their system and ideas in other towns.

Personally, I like the Sunderland attitude; but people have very different ideas of a civic theatre's function, and there is opposition to the Sunderland policy, notably within the theatrical profession itself. Yet, if it is to succeed, the profession will have to be keen. To do Birks's job, you need a new kind of Socialist impresario.

What sort of men, then, has the profession got to produce? Birks told me, quite modestly, what he can do. He can cast plays and book artists, produce and direct, publicise and make speeches; he can found clubs, encourage amateurs and young people, work with schools; most important, he can work with council departments. "If they know how much it's going to cost them, they can prepare for it in their rate estimates. A manager must be instructed in local government affairs. You cannot expect authorities to accommodate themselves to the arts."

This is a question for Equity members to argue about. (Birks says it's still a vagabond profession, not implicated politically.) Just as the old actor-managers had to be "practical businessmen," so perhaps the new men must be practical civil servants, or practical politicians. That is, if the councils want them. This is the question for local authorities to consider; how willing are they to try to "accommodate themselves to the arts" and to entertainment in general? Will they give experts and enthusiasts a free hand?

Maybe Sunderland has got it all wrong. But in this town they act while others are talking. Nevertheless a town can't plan on its own—no more for theatre than it can for traffic—and there must be not only a national but a regional policy. In civic theatre, as in every other branch of local enterprise, there is an evident need for a measure of decentralisation, based on regional democracy.

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## TOWARDS A NEW DIMENSION IN THE NORTH-EAST

T. DAN SMITH

IN mid-1959 a meeting took place between Dr. C. I. C. Bosanquet, M.A., and myself—to be later joined by Councilor Ted Fletcher—a meeting which was to lead to the formation of the North Eastern Association for the Arts.

At the Association's first Annual Meeting on November 24th, 1961, Dame Flora Robson, D.B.E., the Association's first President, in a recorded message, said :

"A country is judged by posterity on its works of art and its buildings. Art is much more important than battles; think in the last war of Shakespeare being played in Berlin and Wagner being played in London. Art is vital to the life of the people, and the North-East, where I belong, can show this country that art is a large part of our daily lives."

In a comparatively short space of time the Association was accepted both in the region and nationally as an essential part of the life of the North-East.

The conscious feeling behind the formation of the Association was a belief that if sufficient support could be organised and adequate interest and enthusiasm aroused, the North-East could lead Britain into a desire to reach out for a new Quality of Life—with the North-East region becoming a living example and model of what could be achieved.

There was only one way to build the Association—that was to win the support of local authorities—and today many of these authorities, while directly supporting the arts, collectively contribute £40,000 per year towards the income of the Arts Association. Compare this generous support with the



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industrialists of the North-East who, with only three exceptions, were able to contribute only £1,300 this year.

The man in the street now accepts the need for supporting the arts—yet the more backward councils see money spent on the arts as a luxury which cannot be afforded. We still have “artistic apartheid” led by the high-income areas of Gosforth and Whitley Bay, who resolutely refuse to contribute either directly to the Association or to any single project sponsored by it. This is a sad reflection on councillors “representing” the areas which enjoy some of the best physical environment in the North-East.

In addition, there are still the other non-contributing local authorities listed below :

### *Northumberland*

Blyth, Morpeth, Whitley Bay B.C.s, Alnwick, Amble, Bedlingtonshire, Gosforth, Newbiggin, Seaton Valley U.D.C.s, Alnwick, Belford, Bellingham, Glendale, Rothbury R.D.C.s.

### *Durham*

Brandon & Byshottles, Tow Law U.D.C.s, Lanchester, Weardale R.D.C.s.

### *North Riding of Yorkshire (area within our N.E. region)*

Loftus, Croft, Northallerton, Startforth, Stokesley, Thirsk R.D.C.s.

The facts are that we must wage an “artistic rights campaign.”

The North-East must aim to secure for the Association an income of £250,000 a year by 1970—this is vitally necessary to prepare the region for the rebirth that can, and must, take place. The struggle for tomorrow’s North-East is not simply a struggle for homes and jobs—both of these are the rights of the individual in a modern society—but for a vision of the “full enjoyment of full employment” in the coming age of leisure—the adding of new artistic horizons to the lives of people so long denied them, or who, as yet, have seen no need to create them.

The North Eastern Association for the Arts is fighting the hardest battle of all—for it fights for tomorrow's region—very often against "yesterday's minds."

Medical science fights disease and prolongs human life—automation and computers lighten work and shorten hours—and the battle against bad housing and bad working conditions is joined. We are even now beginning to get to grips with the motor car—but we must admit that victory in these battles has been too long delayed.

The battle for the arts in the North-East is now on, and victories are already being won. We have the Northern Sinfonia. The bulk of its work continues to take the form of regular series of concerts in large towns, occasional concerts in smaller towns, and educational engagements, in the North-East. These performances as well as those in other northern cities, in Scotland, and at the festival in Mentone, earned it a growing reputation. The appointment of Rudolf Schwarz and Boris Brott as its new conductors offers an exciting prospect for the immediate future.

Sunderland Council too has pioneered a new concept in civic theatres—and is winning new audiences and taking the lead in forming a touring circuit of civic theatres and forming a link with the National Youth Theatre and the National Youth Orchestra. The People's Theatre Arts Group move from strength to strength—a new theatre is planned in Durham City while at Darlington the Council and the Arts Council are modernising and improving the Civic Theatre. Richmond has restored, at a cost of £17,000, the Georgian Theatre, which is one of the theatre jewels of the North-East. In the Lake District the Rosehill continues to build on its already good reputation. Billingham on Teesside plan a new municipal theatre where they have already established a small gallery in their main shopping centre.

The North-East, through the Northern Federation of Museums and Art Galleries—and the Museums Service for the North of England, show how inter-authority co-operation can work. Exhibitions are being organised and successes shown in the fields of opera, ballet and drama. The B.B.C., together with the Arts Association, have jointly sponsored a

## TOWARDS A NEW DIMENSION IN THE NORTH-EAST

television play with a top prize of £500—next we want competitions for writers and poets.

Yes, many are the victories and many battles lie ahead; but to those people who see the North-East as an artistic wasteland—look at this list :

## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACILITIES IN THE NORTH-EAST

### 1. *Art Galleries*

Berwick.

Gulbenkian Gallery, People's Theatre, Arts Centre,  
Newcastle upon Tyne, 6.

Hatton Gallery, University of Newcastle.

Stone Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1.

Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1.

Westgate Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Univision Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Grainger Gallery, Mawson Swan & Morgan, Newcastle  
upon Tyne.

Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead.

Sunderland Art Gallery.

Gray Art Gallery, West Hartlepool.

Arts Centre, Billingham.

Burliston Art Gallery, Durham.

City Restaurant Art Gallery, Durham.

Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle.

Art Gallery, Darlington.

Preston Hall Art Gallery, Stockton.

Municipal Art Gallery, Middlesbrough.

Pannet Art Gallery, Whitby.

### 2. *Museums*

Berwick.

Newcastle upon Tyne :

Keep Museum.

Black Gate.

Museum of Antiquities.

The Plummer Tower.

## ESSAYS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISE

Museum of Science and Engineering.  
Hancock Museum.  
Greek Museum.  
Saltwell Park Museum, Gateshead.  
Sunderland Museum.  
Gray Museum, West Hartlepool.  
Gulbenkian Museum of Oriental Art, Durham.  
Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle.  
Darlington.  
Preston Hall, Stockton.  
Dorman Memorial Museum, Middlesbrough.  
Pannet Museum, Whitby.  
Grace Darling Museum, Bamburgh.  
Roman Fort and Museum, Chester.  
Corstopitum Museum, Corbridge.  
Roman Wall and Museum, Housesteads.  
Green Howards Museum, Richmond.  
South Shields Museum and Roman Fort.

### 3. *Theatres*

Priory Theatre, Whitley Bay.  
Repertory Theatre (Plaza), Tynemouth.  
People's Theatre, Arts Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne.  
Flora Robson Playhouse, Newcastle.  
Theatre Royal, Newcastle.  
Empire Theatre, Sunderland.  
Little Theatre, Gateshead.  
Y.M.C.A. Theatre, Stockton.  
Little Theatre, Middlesbrough.  
Civic Theatre, Darlington.  
Georgian Theatre, Richmond.  
Spa Theatre, Whitby.  
Pavilion Theatre, Redcar.  
Pier Pavilion, South Shields.

### *Cinemas which can be used for live theatrical performances*

Theatre Royal, Blyth.  
Essoldo, Whitley Bay.  
Essoldo, Gateshead.



TOWARDS A NEW DIMENSION IN THE NORTH-EAST

Essoldo, Chester-le-Street.

Essoldo, Durham.

Eden Cinema, Bishop Auckland.

Hippodrome, Stockton.

Globe Cinema, Stockton.

Lyric Cinema, Northallerton.

4. *Music*

There are thirty-six active music societies in the region obtaining subsidy through the National Federation of Music Societies. Some of the more important groups are as follows :

Cappella Novocastriensis.

Newcastle upon Tyne Cathedral Choral Society.

Newcastle and Gateshead Choral Union.

Palatine Opera Group.

Tyneside Music Society.

Cleveland Music Society.

—and rejoice !

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T. Dan Smith is the Leader of Newcastle City Council.

## *Especially for Children*

### THE VALUE OF A SMALL ZOO

PHYLLIS BARCLAY-SMITH

ANIMALS have always proved an irresistible attraction to the majority of British people as the organ-grinder of old, with his pet monkey or his mongrel dog wearing a Union Jack over its back, knew well and exploited to the full. This interest has increased enormously during the last few decades and, undoubtedly helped by the television programmes, has progressed from domestic animals to the animals of the wild. Another aspect of this interest is the underlying knowledge that we are in danger of losing our wildlife unless strenuous efforts are made to preserve it. This underlying knowledge must be brought to a realisation of the situation and in this local authorities can play a part by the institution of children's zoos in their parks. Such zoos can do much to awaken an interest in natural history and also bring a great deal of pleasure both to children of all ages and to the not so young.

The large national and provincial zoos have in several cases provided a children's corner or children's zoo but to visit them entails further payment in addition to the entry fee. The large zoos with their numerous and interesting collections have their value but so also do the small zoos, as by the very fact that they are small a homely atmosphere can be created which in a larger organisation is impossible. The smallest child can be taken round without becoming unduly fatigued and as the entry fee is only a few pence the zoo can be visited frequently by the people in the neighbourhood who come to regard the animals as their personal friends. An example of this attitude was strikingly demonstrated when at a L.C.C. park some years ago hooligans seriously wounded a red deer hind during the night and killed a number of rabbits which were kept in

an enclosure in the park. Local feeling ran so high that widely expressed feeling was that those hooligans deserved to be lynched. Enquiries came in every day asking how the deer was progressing and fortunately it recovered.

Enclosures in a zoo do not call for complicated construction or fanciful architecture, in fact this is to be deplored and the simpler they are the better. There are three main requirements: 1. The inmates should be suitably and comfortably housed; 2. They should be shown in as natural surroundings as possible; and 3. The barriers should be sufficient only to keep the animals in and the public out. As Monsieur Jean Delacour, one of the greatest experts in the world on the keeping and display of animals and birds in captivity, wrote in *The Journal of the American Institute of Park Executives*, "A cardinal principle must never be forgotten—the exhibit itself is the only object which should call the public's attention." He goes on to advise that any flashy colours on the cage or fence are to be avoided and only discreet tones which harmonise well with the surroundings should be used, also that light fencing and wire-netting are better painted black, a colour which makes them almost invisible.

There is no need nowadays to use thick wire and large supports, especially for the construction of aviaries, for excellent tubular or angle iron structures and weld meshings are obtainable. Birds like cover and will keep in good health and look better in aviaries planted with bushes, shrubs and plants, but care must be taken not to have species which destroy vegetation by tearing it to pieces with their bills.

In addition to the pens and enclosures a few domestic animals which can wander at will in the zoo are a great asset. Though animals should in no way be considered as playthings, most small children have a great desire to pet and stroke them, and this is denied to many children now that it is frequently impossible to allow pets in flats. The free roving animals in the zoo will fulfil this desire and calves, sheep and young goats are particularly good for this purpose. They do not mind how much they are petted, welcome being fed and will not harm the children as no child is frightened by them. The provision of pony rides will also bring untold joy to many children.

As it is not usually feasible to keep the zoo open all the year round the provision of winter quarters is necessary and these can also be used as sleeping quarters for the free roving animals and those whose pens have no inside accommodation. The provision of a room in which sick animals can be placed and given special care is essential, and also an economic proposition for any animal that dies is a financial loss. The public do not like to see a sick or unhappy animal or a bird moping at the bottom of an aviary, and complaints will quickly come in.

The staffing of the zoo is of great importance and it should be under the supervision of a knowledgeable person. The choice of animals to be shown, design of pens, provision of suitable food and the maintenance of animals in good health requires specialised knowledge, and if these matters are controlled by an expert mistakes can be averted and waste both in food, and loss of animals by death, avoided, probably to the saving of many hundreds of pounds. The choice of the head-keeper in direct charge of the animals is of very great importance and a man or woman with their heart in the work is invaluable. Women are particularly good at caring for animals and are usually conscientious for their welfare, and it is vital that this should be so. More staff is usually required during the summer holidays and this need can often be met by the employment of students who are very pleased to obtain a temporary post during their vacation. In addition to the work of cleaning the enclosures, feeding and caring for the animals, and taking charge of pony rides, there should be sufficient staff to patrol the zoo to ensure that there is no teasing of the animals.

If it is not possible to install a zoo much can be done to interest and educate the public by a mixed collection of water-fowl, which will be increased by the visits of wild birds. Ducks, geese and swans soon become confiding and tame and will tolerate the public coming quite close to them, but if the collection can aspire to pelicans these birds never fail to excite admiration. Paddocks containing deer, or wallabies are also easy to provide.

The L.C.C. has shown great foresight in appointing an



expert to take charge of the collections of birds and animals in their parks and to administer their two children's zoos at Crystal Palace and Battersea Park. A particularly happy example of what a small zoo should be is that at the Crystal Palace where the whole lay-out of the pens and cages has been designed with great taste and simplicity and the animals and birds chosen with great care to provide a selection of creatures which are amusing or beautiful to watch and those which can be petted. The undulating ground of the small island on which the zoo is situated has been utilised to the greatest effect, the paths winding up and round through the grass giving the impression of much greater space than there actually is. The long flight aviary at the summit, planted with trees and shrubs and with a small pool at one end, shows the birds to the best advantage and the fact that there is an enclosure there at all is soon forgotten at the sight of the birds making long flights from end to end, busying themselves among the branches of the bushes, or in the grass underneath, and bathing in the pool. The otter enclosure, with a long pool fed by a small waterfall, is designed to provide surroundings in which these animals are happiest and give the very tame otters occupying it every opportunity to show off their amazing skill as swimmers, or to stand up on their hind feet and rub their noses against the netting when they see someone they know or consider it is time to be fed. Penguins are not easy to keep but the collection of Humboldt's Penguins and two magnificent King Penguins do very well in their enclosures on one side of the island where they have an ample pool in which to swim. Pygmy donkeys and water deer are placed in enclosures which are so well designed that, seen from the bank, they look as if they were wandering about free. A chimpanzee, Lottie, looking in the best of health in her well-cleaned large cage shared with a gibbon, of which she is inordinately jealous, has a small hut into which she can retreat if she wishes for privacy. But like all chimps she enjoys showing off and the more attention she gets the more she will play up, which pleases both her and the public. The white rabbits sitting among the roots of a large tree give quite a different impression to a rabbit in a hutch, and the guineapigs running about

in their pen can be handled without harm. The calves either wandering about or lying placidly on the grass for little girls to put their arms around, look the picture of contentment and the goats and sheep do not take long to learn that bags contain something of interest for them. A small Himalayan bear is very tame and enjoys boxing with his keepers. He is led back to the sleeping quarters each night on collar and chain and the cavalcade of bear, chimp, monkeys, calves, goats and sheep walking from their island up the hill to bed is one of the outstanding events of the day.

This varied collection of well-house, well-displayed and well-cared-for animals can be seen for an entrance fee of 6d. for an adult and 3d. for a child, and a ponyride costs 3d. Three years ago this zoo consisted of a number of large and unattractive nanny goats, some rabbits and guineapigs and a few birds. The appreciation of the public in the great improvement of what is now provided for them is shown in the entrance figures which in 1961 were 50,000 but by 1963 have risen to 140,000 and the number of pony rides totalled 50,000. The large proportion of adults visiting the zoo is an interesting feature.

The remark of the senior woman keeper "It's when you hear the visitors saying how well the animals look that makes the job so worthwhile" is a significant indication of the excellent way in which this zoo is run.

For the children who visit this zoo the penguins, chimpanzee, monkeys, bear, otters and other animals and birds are not seen in the confusion of the somewhat overwhelming number of impressions gained in visiting a large zoo, nor are they remote figures on a television screen, but are regarded as their own personal friends. In promoting this attitude the first seeds are sown of the realisation that animals must be preserved. The L.C.C. has given a lead which might well be developed by other local authorities as part of a service to the public both from the amenity and educational point of view together with the wider and more long-term aspect of the conservation of wildlife, a natural heritage which once lost can never be replaced.

*Grahame Dangerfield writes:*

TODAY more than ever before there is a very great need for instruction in the conservation of wildlife. Local authorities have a great opportunity these days to carry this out in the form of small and well presented zoos. I think many local authorities however do not appreciate the enormous increase in interest in wildlife that this country has seen in the past decade. For this reason they may too often fear the original expense in setting up a small zoo, and they may feel that use of the ratepayers' money is not justified.

As Miss Barclay-Smith points out, the Crystal Palace attendance has increased from 50,000 in 1961 to 140,000 in 1963. Local authorities should take note of such figures, and consider seriously that if they were to set out a small zoo, then there would almost certainly be such a tremendous public reaction that they need never again fear any drain on the ratepayers' pockets. I am certain that it is quite easy to run such a zoo at a considerable profit, and I am confident that few local authorities would not be prepared to use the "gate" money to expand the zoo, and increase its amenities.

The question of small zoos for local authorities interests me very much, because I am now involved in one. My own private zoo is to be taken over very shortly by St. Albans City Council, and will be housed in Verulamium Park. There is a great difference between keeping animals privately, and allowing the public to see them. For this reason I have had to apply a completely new line of thought to the way in which the St. Albans zoo will be set out. New zoos must take advantage of new materials for cage construction, and as much natural foliage as possible should always be used and built around.

Feeding costs need not be high, and staff need not be numerous. Keen female staff with an interest in wildlife can be very good indeed. Scraps from local restaurants form a good basic diet for many animals and cost nothing. A pets' corner is always popular with children, as are the old favourites—colourful parrots and small birds, monkeys, and bushbabies. But let every local authority consider how much

it can do in the conservation field. Modern and clear names on the cages with some information about each species' position on the list of vanishing animals are important, and whenever possible a zoo has a very real responsibility to attempt to breed birds and animals that are becoming rare. Publicity is all-important, and apart from the need to keep local newspapers, national newspapers and television posted with any new or interesting development, nothing goes down better than a breeding success with pictures of parent animals and young.

Finally may I strongly advise that local authorities should do this, do it properly, and above all seek the help and advice of the World Wildlife Fund, and for children's zoos the Wildlife Youth Service, both of whom I know will be interested to help all they can.

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## THE VALUE OF PUPPETRY

BERNARD C. LEWIS

WE live in an age of increasing leisure, and it is vital for the well-being of society that entertainment of some cultural value should be available, not only to fill the passing hour, but also to stimulate interests which will lead to active participation. The mass media which predominate, the film and television, require such intricate organisation that the ordinary individual cannot fulfil any role other than that of a passive spectator. The living theatre provides a closer contact with the individual and there are opportunities through the amateur dramatic societies for those with some acting ability to live out their fantasies and broaden their sympathies through the attempt to portray characters which may be foreign to their own personalities.

The puppet theatre is usually overlooked when this world of drama is being considered, yet it contains within its field a potentiality which can be very rewarding. The wide range of activities which are involved are such that they can be achieved either by one or two or by a larger group of individuals without necessarily requiring great financial outlay. Those who are handy with carpenter's tools can construct the theatre. Those with artistic abilities can make the puppets, design and paint the scenery. Those with a flair for needlework can create the costumes. Those who lack manual dexterity may show their talents by writing the play, while those with an itch for acting can transmit their powers through the medium of the puppet. These are but some of the activities which must be combined before the show can be presented. It can be readily seen that there is plenty of scope for self expression and a grand opportunity to co-operate in the

creation of an art form which will give satisfaction to all those who have participated.

It is this combination of self expression and co-operation which appeals to the educationist both in the school and in the education office. It is realised that it is all too easy for the individual to be overwhelmed by the intricacies of modern living and to abdicate from any real social participation. Puppetry charms the way even for the most diffident. It cannot of course be maintained that the puppet theatre provides the only training towards an amalgamation of individualisation and socialisation of the child—that would be absurd—but it can offer one method full of potentialities which is well worth investigation.

Those teachers who have introduced puppetry into the schools are often desirous of having their children see some professional company so that they can be still further stimulated in their own activities. The Lilliput Marionette Theatre is one company which devotes most of its time to presenting plays in the schools and so it may be of interest to say something of its work.

The Lilliput Marionette Theatre was founded some twenty years ago in Walsall, Staffordshire, by a small group of people who were interested in education. Among these was Edward Hellawell, A.R.C.A., who created the puppets and designed and painted the scenery. It was felt that a puppet theatre which devoted itself to a series of variety turns would not be as exciting and rewarding as the production of plays. In any case, variety acts could easily be incorporated into the play itself. The first choice of a full-length play was *Faust*. It will be remembered that Goethe had been inspired to write his well-known version of the legend after witnessing a puppet play on that subject. The Lilliput production was based on Goethe and presented in thirteen scenes with glove puppets. After some experience with gloves it was thought that marionettes would provide more scope and after some consideration of combining both types of puppets it was decided to concentrate on marionettes. The first marionette play was *A Christmas Carol*, which earned the approval of the local branch of the Dickens Fellowship. Then followed an excerpt

from *Faust* which was later to be expanded into the full version. It was early realised that the marionette is ideally suitable for the exploitation of the fantastic, and so *The Caliph Stork* was the next presentation, later to be revised and renamed *The Lost Princess*. Here we have the magic of the fairy tale incorporating a camel with delightful antics and the puppeteer's favourite device—the skeleton which comes to pieces. Next came *The Mermaid* based upon Hans Andersen. This gave an opportunity to give full rein to puppetry in the creation of such underwater animals as the sea horse, the crab, the swordfish and the octopus, as well as such well-known characters as Davy Jones and King Neptune. This was followed by *Hansel and Gretel*, and here again such characters as fawns and rabbits prove that the puppet theatre can pass into a world beyond the capacity of the legitimate stage.

At first the theatre did occasional shows in the locality but later on tours were arranged by the Arts Council of Great Britain, covering such places as Northumberland and the Isle of Wight. Schools were contacted, and although initially it was the grammar schools which used its services, it later found enthusiastic response from all types, from university to infants' schools.

The Lilliput Theatre has always tried to promote interest in puppetry, not only by giving plays but also by demonstrating manipulation and answering questions from the audience, and even inviting those specially interested to watch backstage during the play.

There are various ways of establishing contact with the schools. Sometimes, after approaching the education authority, schools are visited directly and engagements made. Sometimes the education office will circularise the schools to suggest that those interested should apply to the theatre for a visit. Sometimes, as in the case of the London County Council, the West Riding of Yorkshire, Cumberland and Manchester, the authority itself will organise the tour. This last method is the most satisfactory since it enables those most interested to make use of the opportunities in spite of difficulties.

A number of professional companies visit schools as part

of their activities: the Lanchester Marionettes, the Hogarth Puppets, the Sugarloaf Puppets, to mention but one or two. The Little Angel Marionette Theatre in London can be visited by the schools.

It requires to be stressed that the puppet theatre is not only for children, and puppeteers strive to enlighten the public which seems wedded to the idea that puppets can only be of real interest to children. But those who have seen, for example, the Moscow State Puppet Theatre will realise that it can be most "adult" and sophisticated. Indeed it is sad to say that the English may be considered backward in the appreciation of this branch of the theatre.

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Bernard C. Lewis is a puppeteer.



## NEW PLAYGROUNDS

ELLIS HILLMAN

SHAPING the urban environment in which young people grow up—is the theme of *New Playgrounds*, a pamphlet by Lady Allen of Hurtwood. It is a theme which is increasingly finding a place in the work of the more farsighted and progressive local authorities.

It was the social survey “Two To Five In High Flats” which pioneered this revolutionary approach to the needs of young children below school age or in their first years at school.

*Design For Play*, Lady Allen’s first pamphlet, was inspired by this original survey, and in *New Playgrounds* some imaginative and eminently practical suggestions are put forward to provide “stimulating environment” for the older age groups.

The traditional adult attitudes to children’s education lack imagination or warmth, and rarely reach out beyond concern about formal education and organised play in the prescribed school hours. The concept of “natural” education, education about life and people, and the child’s ordinary environment—is foreign to the traditional forms of education.

The problem of the young boy or girl’s leisure time has never been solved within the framework of the orthodox educational pattern, and with the growth of enormous local authority housing estates, the chances of the constructive use of the child’s free time is greatly limited.

What is termed juvenile delinquency has its origin in the type of society where the detention centre and remand home are the sole answer to the absence of facilities or the natural environment in which young people can learn about the world around them in their own fashion.

The Adventure Playground is a revolutionary experiment for absorbing and releasing the energies of young people during the formative years. The urge to experiment with the materials around them, to work with real tools without the permanent fear of adult censure and criticism—all this is fully recognised in the running of the playground.

In this country most of the adventure playgrounds were started and are run by autonomous groups of parents and other people drawn from the immediate neighbourhood.

Waste land awaiting development is the makeshift ground on which these playgrounds have been developed. They are usually held on short leases varying from five to ten years. Highly successful experiments with playgrounds have been carried out in Birmingham, Crawley New Town and London.

The spectacular success of the Birmingham toddlers' playground is, of course, generally known. The imaginative policy of Birmingham City Council provides for a playground with every block of flats of four storeys or more. The age group catered for is five to twelve years, and the number and size of the playgrounds is governed by accessibility to nearby park or open spaces.

The Crawley Town experiment is centred in a Forest Campus. Here, every group has continuous possession of a hut, and are free to do as they please, adapting the premises to suit their needs by putting up partitions, building stages, painting and decorating, and when necessary, bringing in their own equipment and furniture. About a thousand young people use the centre.

The Advisory Committee, drawn from the Corporation, the Crawley and District Community Associations and the Youth Advisory Committee, acts in a purely advisory capacity, leaving the groups to do the actual administration.

In London, too, the LCC's Park Committee has not been slow to see the opportunities afforded by the provision of play parks. The first of these parks was opened in 1959, and they have now become an established feature of many parks. Some of these play parks cater for as many as three to four hundred children during peak hours, and a figure of eight

#### NEW PLAYGROUNDS

hundred has been recorded—a figure which is almost unmanageable.

Information about these playgrounds, and more useful information about how to start new playgrounds, is set out in this valuable pamphlet *New Playgrounds* (obtainable from the Housing Centre Trust, 13 Suffolk Street, London, S.W.1, at 8s. post free).

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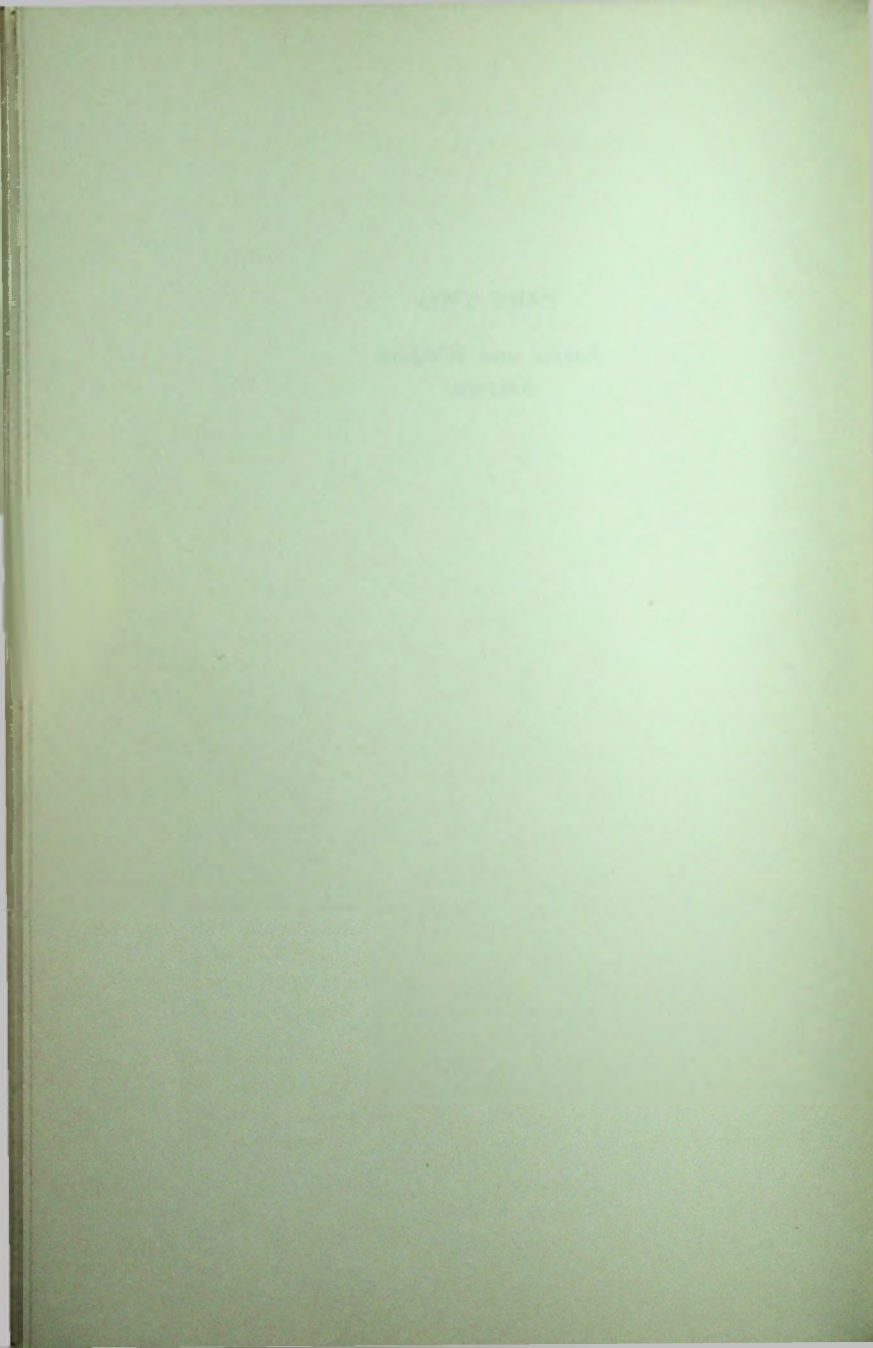
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PART TWO

*Social and Welfare  
Services*



## IMMIGRATION: HOW WILLESDEN TACKLED THE PROBLEM

DAVID WINNICK

THE outbreak of racial trouble in the summer of 1958 came as a nasty shock to many people in Britain. In some parts of London and elsewhere, there were reports that negro-baiting had become a sort of sport. A number of youths would go over in the summer evenings of that year to watch or even participate in the trouble. Naturally many West Indians were scared. Their fears were not only concerned with their immediate security, but with their whole future in Britain.

The racial flare-up released a good deal of the colour prejudice and resentment which certainly existed amongst a large section of white people. Whilst most people one talked to deplored the violence which was going on in areas like Notting Hill, few seemed to have any sympathy for the immigrants' problems, or any real understanding as to why they had come over here.

### *The Labour Movement acts*

The healthiest attitude undoubtedly came from the organised Labour and trade union movement. The T.U.C. passed a strongly worded resolution after a debate about the trouble which deplored all forms of racialism or discrimination, following a discussion of the violent flare-ups. Constituency Labour parties and numerous trade union branches did the same.

One lesson which many Socialists and social workers learnt from Notting Hill in that summer of 1958, was the need to deal more effectively with the problems of negro integration in Britain. It was in a North-West London borough that the

first steps were taken. Here, the local Labour Party decided that the creation of a special body to deal with integration and racial problems generally was urgently needed.

### *Labour's history in Willesden*

A few words are necessary here to give some background to the political situation in Willesden.

Labour first won control of the Willesden Council in 1933, and has managed to retain a majority of council seats ever since. Early industry and the development of the railways left their mark on Willesden. It is a large borough with little cohesion. The borough is divided up into separate wards, all more or less self-contained and keeping very much to themselves.

Since the early 'thirties the Council has been mainly involved in slum clearance and redevelopment, but there are still many slums and decaying areas waiting to be pulled down and rebuilt.

### *West Indians come to Willesden*

West Indians were naturally attracted to Willesden in the first stages by the employment opportunities.

It was inevitable that the newly arrived immigrants tended to find somewhere to live in the poorer districts of the borough.

Housing is the most formidable problem in Willesden, and the shortage of accommodation has caused more misery and hardship than any other single factor in the post-war years. It is, therefore, not surprising that the arrival of the West Indians caused sharp resentment amongst those who had not been able to solve their own housing problem.

### *Colour bar*

Many immigrants found a colour bar operating when it came to renting furnished rooms which had been advertised for letting. Furnished rooms are about the only type of accommodation available in crowded boroughs like Willesden. This difficulty made many coloured people more determined than ever to purchase a house as soon as possible, and it was this eagerness to buy a house which presented the new body



## IMMIGRATION : HOW WILLESDEN TACKLED THE PROBLEM

set up to deal with racial problems locally with its first tough problem.

### *Willesden International Friendship Council*

It was in 1958 that the Borough Council as a result of the prompting of the local Labour Party decided to establish what became known as the Willesden International Friendship Council.

From the outset, the Borough Council played an active role in the formation and work of the new organisation. The inaugural meeting was held in the council chamber, and the Council invited a large representative gathering to the first meeting over which the Mayor presided. An executive committee was elected and the leader of the Borough Council (Alderman Reg. Freeson) became the first chairman of the W.I.F.C.

### *The Friendship Council—and its hopes*

It was the hope of the founders that as large a representation as possible from the local community would be interested in its work, and would be willing to take part in some of its activities. This hope was quickly realised. Representatives from church bodies, voluntary organisations, social workers, trade union branches as well as the main political parties took their place on the executive committee.

The Borough Council itself was represented officially by three of its members on the E.C. The Council agreed to meet the expenses of the new organisation, and two years afterwards agreed to pay the salary of a full-time officer. The Public Relations Officer of the Borough Council agreed to act as the Friendship Council's honorary secretary.

### *The news spreads*

The news that such a body had come into existence to deal with racial problems and friction locally soon became known to those in difficulties. The aim of the Friendship Council was to try and remove racial friction where it existed in Willesden, and to work for the integration of the new immigrants into the community. Before long a steady stream of

tenants, mostly with complaints about their coloured landlords, were coming to the town hall, asking for help.

What then was the background to these complaints? These complaints usually arose from the fact that a new immigrant landlord bought a house, and came to live in the property. Usually the house had been purchased with only part possession, with a controlled tenant in the occupied part. Under the 1957 Rent Act, tenants who had lived in a house prior to that year, and whose accommodation had a rateable value of £40 or less, continued to have full security of tenure. In most cases the rent paid was low in relation to present-day levels.

Rachmanism occurred in other places where pressure and intimidation was applied to "persuade" the controlled tenant to leave, since once out, the landlord could charge any rent for the accommodation without the new tenant having any security of tenure. The incentive for unscrupulous landlords to indulge in these odious practices was very tempting.

### *The immigrant landlord*

The immigrant landlord having bought the property at great financial sacrifice and with a heavy mortgage was resentful that he had a tenant and family occupying half the house whom he could not legally evict, or raise the rent. Then again, there was the possibility that with some luck he might prosper, and live off his rents as a landlord.

The controlled tenant, who usually has lived in the property for some length of time, certainly has no intention of moving out. Where could he move to? Even if he could find another flat for himself and his family, the rent would be far more than he could possibly afford. And the tenant was likely to be too old to be seriously considered for a mortgage.

The brutal fact of the matter was that no matter what pressure was applied against his family and himself, the tenant was not going to move out, because there was simply nowhere else to live, apart from a furnished room.

The tenant would then come along to the town hall where he would see the officer who was both the P.R.O. of the Borough Council and secretary of the Friendship Council. At a later stage, when a full-time officer was appointed, he would

see him as well. The sort of complaints the officer would hear would be that of a coloured landlord making the tenant's life a hell on earth. Stories of intimidation, abuse, even assault, of landlords locking the letter-box, and of creating disturbances, just to annoy the tenant, and perhaps making him decide finally to leave the house, quickly reached those in a position to help.

*The E.C. moves into action*

The executive committee received these calls for help, and decided upon the practice of sending one white and one coloured member along to the house where the friction had arisen. Even members who believed that the trouble was basically economic, realised how ugly the friction could become where the quarrelling parties had different coloured skins.

A procedure was worked out where the two conciliators arranged to see both the landlord and tenant. In a few cases, the landlord would refuse to see them. In most of these cases, however, they did manage to see either the landlord or his wife.

The landlord or his wife would strongly refute the charge that the trouble in the household was in any way due to them. Perhaps the real trouble lay, they would suggest to the conciliators, in the fact that the tenant didn't like a coloured landlord over them.

When the tenant was seen with his family, the accusation of colour prejudice was hotly denied. If any prejudice did exist now, it was, they would claim, due only to the behaviour of the landlord or his wife. Indeed, much of the trouble in the house seemed to exist mainly between the wives, since they had to live together in the house so much more than their respective husbands. This was quite understandable.

The caseworkers—all voluntary workers—would then point out that since the tenant and landlord had to live together, whether they liked it or no, they had better try and co-exist peacefully. Sometimes the caseworkers would have to go back to the house until much of the friction had been removed between landlord and tenant, but in many cases, it was clear

that no amount of peaceful talk or persuasion would resolve the difficulties.

### *Case conference*

After each visit had been made, a case conference would discuss the various cases that had arisen and decide on what recommendation to make to the executive committee. It was often felt that it would be a sheer waste of time to "follow up" some of the worst cases where no useful purpose would be served by further visits. Sometimes in cases of this sort, the tenant or landlord, or both, would be told that the only real remedy would lie in legal action.

There can be little doubt that the fact that two people had bothered to interest themselves in the trouble existing in a household left some impression of both tenant and landlord.

The tenant would feel that someone cared about his troubles, and was at least trying to help. The landlord realised that the trouble in the house had reached the ears of the authorities. Though the caseworkers would always emphasise that they were only lay case workers, the landlords nearly always looked upon them as "people from the town hall," i.e. people in authority.

### *Racial discrimination*

Racial discrimination was a matter that the Friendship Council had under consideration from the very beginning. Indeed it would be rather unusual for an agenda of an E.C. meeting not to have at least one item that alleged some form of colour discrimination.

The discriminatory advertisements that appear in local papers stating "no coloureds," etc., were debated, and it was agreed that the editors should be requested to forbid such advertisements from appearing in their papers. The editor's reply usually took the line that though they deplored any discrimination, they didn't want to impose a censorship in their advertisement columns. The argument was also used that discriminatory advertisements, though to be deplored, at least saved the coloured person from embarrassment. Otherwise, the argument would go, the immigrant might find himself



being turned down by the landlady because of his colour on the doorstep.

The Friendship Council felt, and rightly so, that as long as such discriminatory practices were allowed to be published they would continue to be regarded as normal practices, and not reprehensible in any way. Some local publicity arose out of the E.C.'s opposition to these advertisements.

From time to time, it would be alleged that some employer was discriminating because of colour, and such complaints were always fully discussed and followed up. Many members were concerned that the Labour Exchange was in a sense a party to discrimination. If an employer stated for instance that he did not want coloured applicants for jobs, the Labour Exchange noted his requirement on their cards. Again, as with discriminatory advertisements, the employers' bias became, or tended to become, a normal requirement from some employers.

#### *Various other activities*

Apart from case work, a good deal of time was devoted by the Friendship Council to the sponsoring of various different groups. This sort of work particularly increased when a full-time officer (Oswald Murray) was appointed. A jazz ballet group became very successful, and has remained in existence now over a number of years. A theatre group was also started, as well as a social club and one or two other projects. Apart from the jazz group, some of these groups did not prosper very much, yet they all managed to interest a number of people in the work of the Friendship Council.

#### *Summing up*

The Friendship Council soon found itself accepted in the borough. Even when it touched on controversial subjects, like opposition to the Commonwealth Immigration Act, it did not lose popular support.

There seemed to be growing up in Willesden a high degree of sensitivity towards being considered "anti-colour." Certainly this was the case with the councillors of both political parties on the Borough Council, and generally amongst party acti-

vists. Most organisations and people were only too willing to co-operate with it, when problems arose that involved coloured people.

What of the professional racist? Whether Willesden has less of these hate merchants than other London boroughs it is difficult to say. But certainly, by and large, they were not considered very active locally. There is, however, no cause for complacency. This need not always be the case. The Friendship Council can claim some success here, for by support for fair play for all in the local community, white and coloured, it has tended to force the opponents of integration on the defensive.

Of course, it would be silly and naïve to believe that all the current problems of race relations in this single borough have been solved. That this is not so must be obvious from the tenor of this article. But there can be little doubt that the relations between white and coloured people are much better now in Willesden, and Willesden International Friendship Council can claim much of the credit for this state of affairs.

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David Winnick is a member of the Willesden and Brent Borough Councils, and Parliamentary Candidate for Harwich.

## PIONEERING IN CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

FRANK ALLAUN

FEW of us look forward to old age, because there are not many men or women who can grow old gracefully. It usually means the loss of one's faculties, one's life partner and one's job. Physical deterioration may cause "homebound" existence. These are the natural burdens of old age; but if we add to them the unnatural burdens of poverty and loneliness then our declining years are turned into tragedy.

There is a great deal of nonsense talked about the so-called Welfare State. Go round the back streets of our cities, towns and villages and see the misery which exists. It will soon be realised that the "Welfare State" has a mighty long way to go.

The present pension on which millions of people are living is £3 7s. 6d. a week, with or without a bit of National Assistance (and Mrs. Dorothy Cole Wedderburn has shown that over half a million pensioners entitled to National Assistance are not claiming it). This is utterly inadequate and until it is substantially increased no amount of welfare work will solve the problem. So I hope it will be clear that in dealing with care for the elderly I am in no way suggesting it as a substitute for a proper pension, but as an additional way of helping them.

I am exceedingly proud of the pioneering achievements of Salford in this field, which I am about to describe. I can relate and praise them without inhibition, since they have been accomplished by the City Council, of which I am not a member.

The question arises: how is it that this city of 160,000 people in industrial Lancashire has been able to give a

national lead in this direction on so many occasions? I think it is for three reasons.

First, the need is so great. Salford has an unusually high proportion of very poor and elderly people. Its housing—a legacy from the Industrial Revolution—is in my view the worst outside Glasgow. Its death rate from bronchitis, largely due to the polluted atmosphere and the damp houses, is the highest in the country.

Second, the Council and the Civic Welfare Committee are dominated by industrial workers, themselves living in the heart of these bad conditions, who really understand the problems of the people they are trying to help. The last three chairmen of the Civic Welfare Committee, for example, have been a docker, the wife of an engine driver and an engineer.

Third, the Director of Civic Welfare, Mr. James Roberts, F.C.C.S., F.Inst.S.W., and this year's national president of his professional association, the Association of Directors of Welfare Services, is an outstanding authority in this sphere. A man whose whole life has been one of service, he is so devoted to his work that he clearly regards it more as a calling than a job. It is because he feels so intimately the problems of the aged and infirm, and because he has such a wealth of experience in handling them, that he can—time after time—come up with completely new ideas. His staff are filled with the same devotion and spirit of self-sacrifice. It is typical of Jim Roberts that he objects to the use of the word "old" for elderly people.

I would now like to mention some of the achievements and then refer to certain proposals which have been made for the future.

### *The total survey*

Salford has been responsible for the first complete survey by any large local authority of every person of pensionable age in its area. Investigation at the home of all such people led to the now world-famous Total Survey Report. It took five years to complete, and the amount of patient work involved will be realised since it required tactful enquiry at the homes of 21,600 elderly people. But it was worth it.



## PIONEERING IN CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

The survey provided the basis for compiling a register of aged and a separate register of 4,000 senior citizens who are living alone. This means that Salford is at present the only authority to be in a position to maintain such records.

Subsequently it has been arranged that those 4,000 living alone shall be visited at least once every six weeks. For the others there is a visit once every six months. Because of this the Salford authorities know what is happening to its senior citizens. The blind, deaf and the crippled have been placed on special registers for these categories.

A wealth of knowledge has been amassed. The survey was not only fact-finding: in the process it satisfied need. Striking cases of elderly people who required help were brought to light. Some were encountered who did not know that there was such a thing as National Assistance or that they were entitled to receive it. Most clearly of all the survey revealed the dire poverty of so many of our fellow countrymen.

One case involved an eighty-two-year-old widow living alone in a spotlessly clean home. A former music hall artiste, she was very much on her own. There was no outward indication of what she was enduring. The trim curtains concealed the real deprivation. The octogenarian lady had threatened suicide by gas poisoning. The gas was removed and electricity installed. A great deal of help was given her by the Civil Welfare Department and the Companionship Circle for the Elderly, a voluntary body about which I will say a word later. The lady was homebound and her only outlet was to write long letters to the Director and the Department. The Circle supplied her with writing materials. In the last letter before she died she dealt in a most moving way with the suffering she had undergone and also the comfort and pleasure given her by the Department.

### *A guidebook for the elderly*

Another idea emanating from the Civic Welfare Department and its indefatigable Director is a twenty-page booklet, written in simple language, which tells elderly people of all the welfare provisions which exist. It gives information about Government assistance in the form of pensions, National

Insurance, National Health Service, and so on. Then it gives details of such local government services as home helps, health visitors and laundry services. Finally, it lists the voluntary clubs and associations in the city.

This booklet has been given to the 21,000 pensioners, and also to doctors, dentists, clergymen, milk roundsmen, coalmen, grocers and people who come into daily contact with the aged. Thanks to the co-operation of the local officers of the Ministry of National Insurance and Pensions, when the first pension book is issued to a pensioner on reaching pensionable age with it is enclosed a brief message from the Civic Welfare Department entitled: "Are you lonely? Are you in need?" This contains a prepaid postcard which an old person can post to the Department asking for the booklet, so that all of them may become aware of existing facilities.

This example has since been emulated by many other local authorities.

### *The Companionship Circle for the Elderly*

This is certainly one of the biggest "success stories" that the city has to tell. One result of the Total Survey was the clearly apparent necessity to eliminate overlapping and duplication of services, particularly amongst voluntary associations. Bearing in mind that the City Council has obviated such duplication by co-ordinating all matters affecting the elderly and handicapped through the Welfare Department, where there was a need for liaison between Corporation departments, an overall voluntary organisation was set up.

It has surpassed in the immense range of its activities anything envisaged at the outset. Titled the Companionship Circle for the Elderly it embraces the local authority, the regional representatives of Government Ministries and the voluntary associations. Among the last mentioned are forty-three pensioners' clubs and fifty trade union, religious, women's youth, co-operative and similar organisations.

The Circle can now provide 4,000 volunteers who regularly visit people in their own homes, particularly those living alone. The names and addresses of the elderly people are supplied by the Department. Even senior children from the secondary

schools volunteer to help. A youth section of the Circle has been set up.

Let me give just a few examples of the activities of the Circle. At Christmas *concerts* are provided with refreshments for 4,000 of the aged. They are each given, in addition, a parcel of food to take home. Those who are homebound each have a more *substantial parcel* taken to their houses.

Each summer there is a Salford *Carnival*, when literally half the population, anything up to 80,000, line the streets for the three-mile procession to the carnival field. Here the Carnival Queen is crowned by Dave King or Marty Wilde or Jimmy Saville or whoever is the current variety celebrity. All along the route the collectors are busy.

A particular boon to the old folk has been the provision by the Circle of large numbers of *reconditioned wireless sets*. They have gone a little way to relieve the weariness of life on one's own and to break the sound barrier of isolation. *Free car transport* has been provided for the infirm and aged to enable them to enjoy a few weeks' holiday with relatives and subsequently return to their own homes. *Golden weddings* and other special events are recognised by gifts of flowers. *Pen friendships* have been arranged between elderly people and youngsters still at school. An interesting type of activity is of visits of young people in couples to the homes of elderly people to *read to them* and to do odd jobs. Another example is members of a trade union branch rolling up at an old couple's home to *decorate the house* from top to bottom, because the occupiers were incapable of doing it for themselves because they lacked the money or the strength. I have seen the present Chairman of the Civic Welfare Committee, A.E.U. member Alderman Joe Hardman, with his sleeves rolled up, busy on this job. Manchester University students, College of Technology students and Manchester Grammar School boys have all helped in this way.

*Gifts* have been provided in astonishing numbers of such things as wheel chairs, commodes, hot-water bottles, walking sticks, clothes and bedding. Special arrangements have been made for over 800 pensioners to attend the first night of local theatrical shows, either free or at a charge of a shilling. Young

volunteers push old people out in *wheel chairs*, elderly people who have not been outside their front doors for perhaps years at a time. There has been regular *bathing* for home-bound pensioners who are frail but not ill or otherwise entitled to such service. The fitting of *handrails* and electric lights to steep staircases and dark landings has probably saved many long stays in hospital—if not worse.

The biggest success, however, of the Circle has been the establishment of

### *Seaside hotels for the elderly*

at Southport on the Lancashire coast forty miles away. Thousands of senior citizens, many of whom have never had a holiday in their lives, have been able to leave the back streets of the city for a fortnight to enjoy luxury meals and surroundings.

I should make it clear that these hotels are in addition to a particular feature of residential accommodation in Salford, which was the opening of the "Salfordian" Seaside Holiday Home at Southport in 1953, with new building extensions and upgrading of the premises in July 1964 at a cost of over £30,000. This is a facet of welfare service which has been followed by a number of other local authorities.

Mr. Roberts is strongly of the view that powers should be given to local authorities to establish holiday homes on lines parallel to those permitted for handicapped persons under the National Assistance Act, 1948.

### *The converted bus*

An interesting example of thoughtful initiative has been the conversion of a corporation bus to provide it with a ramp. This permits old people to be pushed easily into the bus in wheeled or invalid chairs. The specially converted vehicle was brought into service way back in 1954 to convey the severely disabled from their own homes to the social centre or outings. The coach is also used to take elderly residents of the city's small homes on day outings and to take others to the various seaside homes.



*A centre for the handicapped*

An all-purpose social welfare centre catering for a full social, recreational and spiritual life for handicapped people, with varying degrees of physical disability, was established in 1953—the first in the country. It is used extensively, day by day, by the blind, deaf, severely disabled and elderly.

At the centre there are occupational classes for the blind and disabled each afternoon, mixed with social activity. The deaf have splendidly appointed rooms on the top floor, used practically every evening, where a church is also sited, with services to meet the special needs of the deaf and dumb.

In the basement, fitted with special ramps and lavatories, clubs connected with the Invalid Tricycle Association and the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association have weekly meeting nights. There are also clubs for the elderly and, during the winter months, Companionship Circles for those living alone, who thus enjoy afternoons with films and refreshments.

*Emergency services*

are first class. Whenever I have had to call on the Department's services on behalf of Salfordians they have been provided immediately, efficiently and with enormous care for the constituent's problems. The Department deals with all kinds of emergency distress, such as flooding, gas explosions or storm damage; burials; temporary accommodation for the victims of eviction or domestic disputes; care of personal property; information bureau service; and full responsibility for the blind, including sheltered employment.

*Chiropody*

About eight years ago a three-year experiment took place at three convenient centres, also a mobile chiropody service was provided. This was completely free of charge to those on pension or National Assistance. Weekly treatment was given at the centres. Four local qualified chiropodists were engaged on the work at the Society of Chiropodists' scale of fees on a sessional basis. The Council at that time was not allowed by law to provide the service. So the cost was met by the Companionship Circle. The Circle was grateful to the National

Corporation for the Care of Old People, who donated £300 a year for this purpose. Since then, of course, powers have been given to local authorities to provide chiropody through the National Health Service.

*Residential accommodation*

(Under Section 21 of the National Assistance Act, 1948.) Salford has concentrated on provision of small units as residential accommodation for elderly and handicapped people, with a range of sixteen to twenty-seven beds per home. Eleven homes have been opened, the first in 1951, the last in 1963. At three of them there have been extensions with emphasis on providing single bedrooms. A further extension is at present in progress. These accommodate seventy-seven men, 130 women and thirty-five couples at an overall cost of £180,000 including purchase, adaptation and furnishing.

A number of large old houses have been bought by the local authority and divided into bed-sitting rooms for elderly widows, with bathrooms and cooking facilities on each floor. Regular visits are made by the W.V.S. who are responsible for managing the homes. The rents are low—about 15s. a week. In this field, too, many other councils are now adopting the same methods.

The "Homestead," a large single storey building (with not a single step throughout) was opened in 1927, when Salford was the first city boldly to demolish its workhouse with 1,400 residents, on which site was built its first three-storey flats. The "Homestead" has 250 residents and since 1948 continual improvements and modernisation have been carried out, including the turning of dormitories into cubicles to give privacy, individual wardrobes and dressing tables, the upgrading of furnishing and equipment standards throughout the lounges and the main kitchen.

One welcome aspect has been the introduction of special accommodation for married couples who had previously lived separate existences in the care of the local authority, unable to enjoy a normal married life. Part of the "Homestead" was adapted for this purpose in 1955.

*The future*

Now for a brief look at some of the future developments which are either planned or hoped for.

*School meal centres for pensioners*

The Companionship Circle is endeavouring to introduce a scheme which could be applied nationally : use of school meal centres as meal centres for pensioners too. When the children have had their meals served why couldn't the same staff, equipment and premises be employed immediately afterwards to provide good, cheap meals for the elderly?

A nourishing meal with balanced diet could be made available at a charge comparable to that under the mobile meals service, with a 50 per cent subsidy from the local authority or voluntary bodies. I have been struck with the great amount of effort and the number of staff required to provide a limited number of meals to the homebound under the mobile meals service. Provision of meals in very large numbers in the school meals centres could be made far more cheaply and easily.

Of course, where the schools lack a dining room and the school meals have to be eaten in the classroom or in parts of the school building needed for school activities the premises would not be suitable. But I cannot see the objection in schools with dining rooms.

Indeed where children have had their own meals and have time on their hands they might volunteer to help serve the old folk or even carry the meals out to homebound elderly in the immediate neighbourhood of the school. This would require the acceptance in principle by the Minister of Education. It is a permission which I, for one, would urge him to give. I believe this is another of Mr. Roberts's ideas which one day will be widely operated.

It is worth noting that in Twickenham the medical officer of health runs a clinic for old people who are unwell. He discovered that 150 out of the 300 attending were not getting adequate food. When they were provided with proper meals, their health, their happiness and their whole bearing most markedly improved.

### *Day centres*

Four day centres are being aimed at within the next three years in Salford. After all why should the many and flourishing old people's clubs, Old Age Pensioners' Associations, Darby and Joan Clubs and the like be confined to one afternoon or evening a week? These day centres will remain open all day, say from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. They will provide warmth in the winter and thus save coal, which so many pensioners just cannot afford on their present miserable pensions. They will also provide recreation and social life. In addition regular, substantial meals at reduced rates will be obtainable.

### *Sheltered workshops for the handicapped*

Sheltered workshops for the severely disabled are included in the city's ten-year plan. Similar provision for the blind might be incorporated in them.

*Housing* specially designed to meet the needs of disabled people has been planned. This summer eighteen tenancies in a new eighteen-storey building (one on each floor) have been provided in collaboration with the Sutton Trust. The kitchen and bathroom contain gadgets and aids to help the individual overcome his or her disability.

### *Future residential accommodation*

A purpose-built home for forty elderly and handicapped is nearing completion, the local authority having resisted pressure to increase the maximum number of small unit homes to sixty (the Ministry of Health standard). Within the next five years a further six homes of similar type are anticipated. In the Hankinson Street area (the "Hanky Park" made famous in Walter Greenwood's novel, *Love on the Dole*) which is now being redeveloped, plans and costs have just been approved for a new, dual-purpose home for thirty residents, combined with a day centre, catering for 200 aged, with economical planning and joint services from a single kitchen.

Then there is the problem of elderly people living with their married children. Even with the most amiable people, both young and old, this creates difficulties. The young want to be on their own and the old generation do not want to feel



they are a burden. Salford's proposal is that blocks of maisonettes should be built in the grounds of homes for old people which have already been established by local authorities, replacing the old workhouses.

Big mansions have been taken over and many have large grounds ideal for such maisonettes. They would help by enabling a friendly eye to be kept on the aged in such matters as bathing or proper feeding. To provide these maisonettes would be relatively convenient and cheap. It seems anomalous to me that only district councils, under county council arrangements, have powers of this sort. Why should such powers not be extended to county boroughs?

In this connection I refer to the excellent development in Walsall, where "Granny Flats" are being built. These enable the elderly to live under a separate roof, but on the family doorstep. There is a self-contained annexe, comprising bathroom, bed-sitting room and kitchen, adjoining the council house. There is a covered access from council house to flat, and the inclusive rent is under 10s., which seems a remarkably good proposition.

(One elderly man of means has done this himself in Salford at his son's house at little cost.)

### *Free TV licences*

It is a sad business that the elderly, who would probably derive more pleasure from television than any other section of the community, are the least able to afford it. The licence fee of £4 a year on top of other costs makes it impossible for most old folk to have a television set. I do not see why they should not be helped. When I put the question to the Postmaster-General, Mr. Bevins, in the last Parliament, he turned it down. Maybe there will be a change in the future.

### *Paying for progress*

Some of these suggested reforms would cost little except imagination and effort. Others would require a lot of money. Where is the cash to come from? It would need only a tiny cut in our fantastic arms programme of £2,146,000,000 a year to pay for all of them. It hurts me that we can always

find money for military expenditure when a far smaller sum for peaceful purposes cannot be afforded.

*Conclusion*

I hope I have not made Salford sound like the pensioner's Elysian Fields. I don't need to tell you that it is not. It is still what folk singer Ewan McColl (a Salford lad, by the way) calls "Dirty Old Town." There is still a crying need for help, still a mass of poverty and suffering. But it cannot be questioned that, thanks to the courageous ideas and the hard work of the Council, the Civic Welfare Committee, its staff and the voluntary bodies, the harshness of life in this great industrial city has been greatly eased for thousands of elderly and disabled citizens.

It is in the hope that some of these ideas may be of value in other areas that I have written this chapter.

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Frank Allaun is a Member of Parliament for Salford.

## CORNWALL : A NEGLECTED COUNTY

JUDITH COOK

To outsiders Cornwall is one large holiday resort and it is only necessary to read a recent headline in the local paper, "Over £35,000,000 a year spent by tourists in Cornwall—equals total production of agriculture and horticulture," to see how heavily the county depends on the tourist industry for survival. It seems to be forgotten very often that many people actually have to live and work in the county all the time and when one comes down to examining the social services and looking into local government, the picture is not so attractive.

On a national level Cornwall is the county that Whitehall conveniently forgets and its Conservative members do little to remind the Government of any lacks in the social services. Granted that there are many poor and overcrowded schools in towns in other parts of the country, there are also many poor schools in country districts in Cornwall, without such ordinary amenities as hot water and flush lavatories, and Cornwall has the distinction of being the only county whose complete education grant for school building was cut in its entirety in 1963, the year of the "Campaign for Education." Many children suffered as a result but the most appalling example of a school which needed to be rebuilt was that of the primary school at Callington. So unsafe and rotten was the building that concrete buttresses had had to be erected to prop up the walls, whilst fishing net was festooned under the ceilings to catch them if they fell down. Eventually the outcry became such that the Ministry allowed this one school to be rebuilt. Money for education in general is scarce and in this part of the county parents have to buy the B.B.C. booklets for lessons if they want their children to have them and pay the

cost of craft materials. The County Council seem to prefer to pretend all is well rather than press for improvements.

With regard to public health, the hospital situation is grim, with long waiting lists and old buildings. Work has, at last, commenced on the new district hospital at Truro (although this is unlikely to cost as much as the new County Hall which is also being built nearby), but the much needed sub-district hospital at Penzance (which is to implement the existing small hospital there) has again been "deferred." Until recently the only maternity hospital in the county was at Redruth and this is quite small. Gross overcrowding led to many disturbing incidents being reported. Some patients were housed in an annexe composed of old Nissen huts and whilst this part has recently been closed down, the other annexe in an old house is still in use. Patients have to be carried into this building on a stretcher after delivery and passed inside through a window as the door is too narrow to take a stretcher. There are now two excellent new maternity homes, each well appointed, in Penzance and St. Austell, but these deal only with straightforward cases. There is still no proper premature baby unit nearer than Plymouth as the consultant at the maternity hospital does not, apparently, believe in the efficacy of incubators. Premature babies are nursed merely in a "warm room" and mothers who might wish for something rather more up to date have no choice in the matter as there is nowhere else to go. The domiciliary service is, however, excellent although the district nurses have enormous areas to cope with.

Hospital management committees, along with the magistrates bench and the local councils, are still liberally sprinkled with retired service personnel and scions of the local aristocracy and their very make-up ensures that there is little pressure for improvement. Certainly some members of hospital management committees still talk as if they were administering some charitable trust.

Local councils and the County Council are largely composed of "Independents." When the Labour and Liberal parties put up candidates at the last local elections they were accused of "bringing politics into local government." The fact



that many of these "Independents" are known to be active in the Conservative Party, attend Conservative functions and so on, is not, apparently, considered to be "political." The three councils which serve most of the West Cornwall area are the Penzance Borough, West Penwith Rural District and St. Ives Borough. These are made up almost entirely of "Independents."

Penzance Borough has some of the most attractive council housing I have ever seen and this must be said first in its favour. They also made an effort to spread the load when the re-rating came into force so that individual householders did not find their rates increased by so much. Other aspects are less attractive; little care or thought is given to the granting of planning permission for development and even the local paper, usually impartial, has been driven to protest at the rash of unsightly buildings which have sprung up like mushrooms on every available green space. "Planning" is a dirty word even if it means that "free enterprise" will end in destroying the very amenities from which the borough derives so much income from tourists. There is much pious talk about the bored youth of today but the council provides no facilities for young people. The "free library" is free if you actually live in the town but those who live outside it and merely come in regularly to spend their money there have to pay 10s. each person to borrow books, owing to a decision of the library committee. Naturally many country families could not afford the 10s. for each child, so these children did not use the library at all. Following pressure, the county now provides a mobile library service to outlying villages which mitigates the problem to some extent but does not entirely solve it. To see the colour of the politics of the Penzance Independents it was only necessary for the local C.N.D. group to ask if they could rent a room in the Town Hall for a meeting dealing with the United Nations and the Freedom from Hunger Campaign. After much talk of "democracy," a word used every few minutes throughout the meeting, it was decided that people "like that" could not possibly be allowed to use the hall for such a purpose. One of the reasons put forward was because of the damage that might be caused and I remembered this when I

took a foreign visitor there the morning after the room in question had been used for the weekly Bingo session. The floor was covered in dirt, paper, cigarette cartons and bottles. It was quite disgusting. At the same meeting which refused the use of the hall to C.N.D., the finance committee decided against attending a meeting organised by another council some twelve miles away, to discuss ways of combating the high unemployment. (One in five of the labour force was unemployed in Falmouth in the winter of 1963-64.)

St. Ives Council made the headlines when it decided to pull down part of the harbour wall because of the "dirty beatniks" who sat on it and were supposed to drive away trade. St. Ives seems to be busy in that direction itself, its streets are becoming more and more congested with traffic for which there is little parking space, its public lavatories are often filthy and the prices in the shops very high indeed. A recent council meeting agreed to allow the Mayor a further £200 a year for expenses and turned down a request for more life-saving equipment on the beaches because it was too expensive.

West Penwith R.D.C. embraced the new rating assessments wholeheartedly and our rates are now amongst the highest in the country. We wrote and asked what we would be getting for our hugely increased rates, pointing out that we had no made-up road, no water, no drainage, no street lighting, no public library and no hot water in the primary school, and received a reply to the effect that if we wanted such things we had better not live in the country. This council too seems to have little thought for development and the attitude of council members has never been better expressed than when the "Zennor dispute" was finally over. The council supported an army scheme for using some of the last, unspoiled countryside around Zennor for army exercises. Aware of what had happened in Dartmoor many local residents were opposed to the idea. Practically everyone who opposed the scheme was a ratepayer of the West Penwith R.D.C. and when they won their cases the remarks of various council members were most instructive. The Chairman, Mr. R. J. Hall, declared, "It's a pity these people who have nothing to do with it should have raised objections to the proposals. I hope that in the future

these people will mind their own business and leave us to mind ours." Another councillor said, "It is a bad thing that people should exert their influence to save Zennor for artists and people like that. We should take a stand against these people."

To sum up, Cornwall is out of date in the worst possible sense. The County Council does not seem prepared to press for general improvements in health, transport and education and the local authorities prefer to allow haphazard development and rely on tourists rather than plan amenities and attract light industry. It is little to be wondered at that so many young people leave the county.

The whole machinery of local government needs to be drastically overhauled. Perhaps it would help if expenses were provided for those who would be useful in local government but cannot afford to stand. In Cornwall, as elsewhere, I know of several women who would have been willing to try for seats on the local and County Council, but could not do so because of lack of domestic help. This problem deserves a chapter to itself, but it is worth considering if we want to see a new look in local government.

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Judith Cook is a journalist with special interests in Cornish affairs.

## ALCOHOLISM AND CRUDE SPIRIT DRINKING

Interview with the REVEREND DR. DONALD SOPER

1. *How serious is the problem of alcoholism today, and what in your opinion are the root causes of this condition? Are figures available indicating the seriousness of the problem?*

It is indubitably a serious problem, though specific figures are difficult to come by. This is not surprising for two reasons: (i) its diagnosis and publicity are of very recent provenance and (ii) the kind of treatment available from which statistics could be devised is equally recent.

The evidence suggests that there are in the community at the moment, some 250,000 employable alcoholics and probably another 150,000 unemployable alcoholics. Clinical treatment of some kind or another is being provided for some 35,000 alcoholics.

The root causes of alcoholism are complex, but have considerably to do with an affluent and hectic society. Inadequacy to cope with a sense of insecurity, deprivation in early youth, the early contracting of the drinking habit, a chemical imbalance from which some people suffer, the absence of either religious convictions or taboos—all these are contributory factors.

2. *Is there any statistical evidence one way or the other, indicating any trends over the last immediate post-war years?*

It would be dangerous to think that alcoholism was necessarily increasing, since both diagnosis and treatment might give this appearance. Whereas, in fact, the only hard evidence is that a concealed alcoholism is now becoming apparent.

At the same time, my own experience would tend towards the belief that there is a progressive increase in the number of those afflicted by this disease.



3. *Why was the Alcoholic Rehabilitation Centre formed, and how has it progressed since its inception?*

The West London Mission's Alcoholic Rehabilitation Centre was formed to meet needs felt by the Probation Service, the Prison Service, the Reginald Carter Foundation, and the West London Mission. A residential centre for the assistance of alcoholics. Its progress has been rapid, and its size has been found to be totally inadequate to meet the needs which present themselves.

A paramount need in any remedial work for alcoholics is to provide an environment in which the alcoholic will be prepared to accept the treatment prescribed for him. It is the combination of medical and personal care in combined clinics and hostel that alone provides this condition.

4. *How is the Centre organised and run, and what support has it received from local authorities?*

The Centre is run by social workers and nursing staff, under the direction of a house committee, composed of experts in various fields (architecture, finance, physical and mental medicine, etc.), as well as the general support of the health committee of the local authority. There is a specific grant of ninety per cent of the annual cash deficit.

The overall responsibility lies with the West London Mission of the Methodist Church. It is the experience of the Mission in other fields of social work that a voluntary organisation is peculiarly suited to render adequate service, because it can tap a reservoir of vocational enthusiasm, and can link the work of a particular hostel with an active fellowship, and indeed, a worshipping community.

5. *What is meant precisely by the term "rehabilitation," and to what extent has after-care and the continuation of some further treatment been found necessary following "discharge"?*

"Rehabilitation" in general terms, is the process applied to an inadequate person between initial medical treatment applied to a chronic situation of alcoholism and the final independent life in home or lodgings, which follow it. Alcoholism is a recurring disease and rehabilitation can well be a recurring process.

There is no cure for the alcoholic. The optimum hope is a condition of continuing convalescence.

After-care is supremely important and we are embarking in the West London Mission on an out-patient unit which we now know to be as imperative as the in-patient work.

6. *How recently has "crude spirit drinking" become a problem, and what are the particular causes of it?*

"Crude spirit drinking" is a problem of long standing, and the close descendant of the excessive gin drinking of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It has no particular causes, but is closely associated with a psychopathic condition.

Crude spirit drinking is the last and hopeless stage of the untreated alcoholic. Nothing whatever can be done for the crude spirit drinker until the law makes it possible for doctors to institutionalise such poor relations of the alcoholic down-and-out.

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Donald Soper is a Minister of Religion.

## CRIME : A CHALLENGE TO US ALL\*

THIS recently produced Labour Party document attempts, and in many ways succeeds, in getting to the main problems of crime today, particularly in crime amongst the young. It starts with the assumption that, as so many of those now in prison have already been in Borstals or approved schools, any investigation of crime and its prevention must deal with the young. Sad as it is, the juvenile delinquent today, may well be the criminal of tomorrow.

In the Greater London Council area, in particular, where many of the responsibilities for the children's services are now in the hands of the local boroughs, the suggestions this document makes for trying to prevent crime and for dealing with it among the young are of special interest. It is suggested, for instance, that since much and perhaps practically all juvenile delinquency can be traced to the home, one of the first steps must be the setting up of a new family service. This will use and extend some of the functions of existing local government, relating to children and families, such as the health, welfare and various aspects of the children's services—as well as working closely with voluntary bodies which have concerned themselves with family problems. Powers to prevent family breakdown and thus avoiding children coming into care or before a court, have recently been granted to local authorities, but as the emphasis must be on family security, the vision of a family service is a very commendable one. Each local authority will set up a family service committee with a skilled social administrator at its head in the scheme. Its function will be to rehabilitate the homeless where children are so often in care, and to advise and assist any families where breakdown is threatened. This sort of concept can have far-

\* Published by The Labour Party, price 4s.

reaching effects. It can take in the unmarried mother and her child, so well cared for before birth, but so often neglected after the birth of the child.

Another recommendation which alters the concept of the child who has become anti-social, is that of the establishment of family courts. This taken in conjunction with the family service organisation is an imaginative idea, since the outcome of the family service would be that children who would normally come before a court either in need of care and protection or charged with an offence will have their needs met by this service. But for the others where judicial machinery is needed, emphasis is put on these family courts where the welfare of the family as a whole will be the main consideration. These courts will deal with care and protection cases up to the age of eighteen, parental neglect and cruelty, as well as school attendance and a variety of other problems which are so often isolated from the family relationships.

This book is facing up to the vast problem of crime prevention rather than punishment. It is placing the emphasis on the family and on society, and urging society to accept responsibility for its offenders rather than merely wishing to punish them. It re-examines attitudes to offenders and to our various methods of dealing with them. It questions many of our widely held beliefs and challenges our assumptions and prejudices. It does not make the mistake of pretending to have found the cause or the solution to crime, but it seeks to prevent the rise and spread of particular circumstances where it appears most frequently.

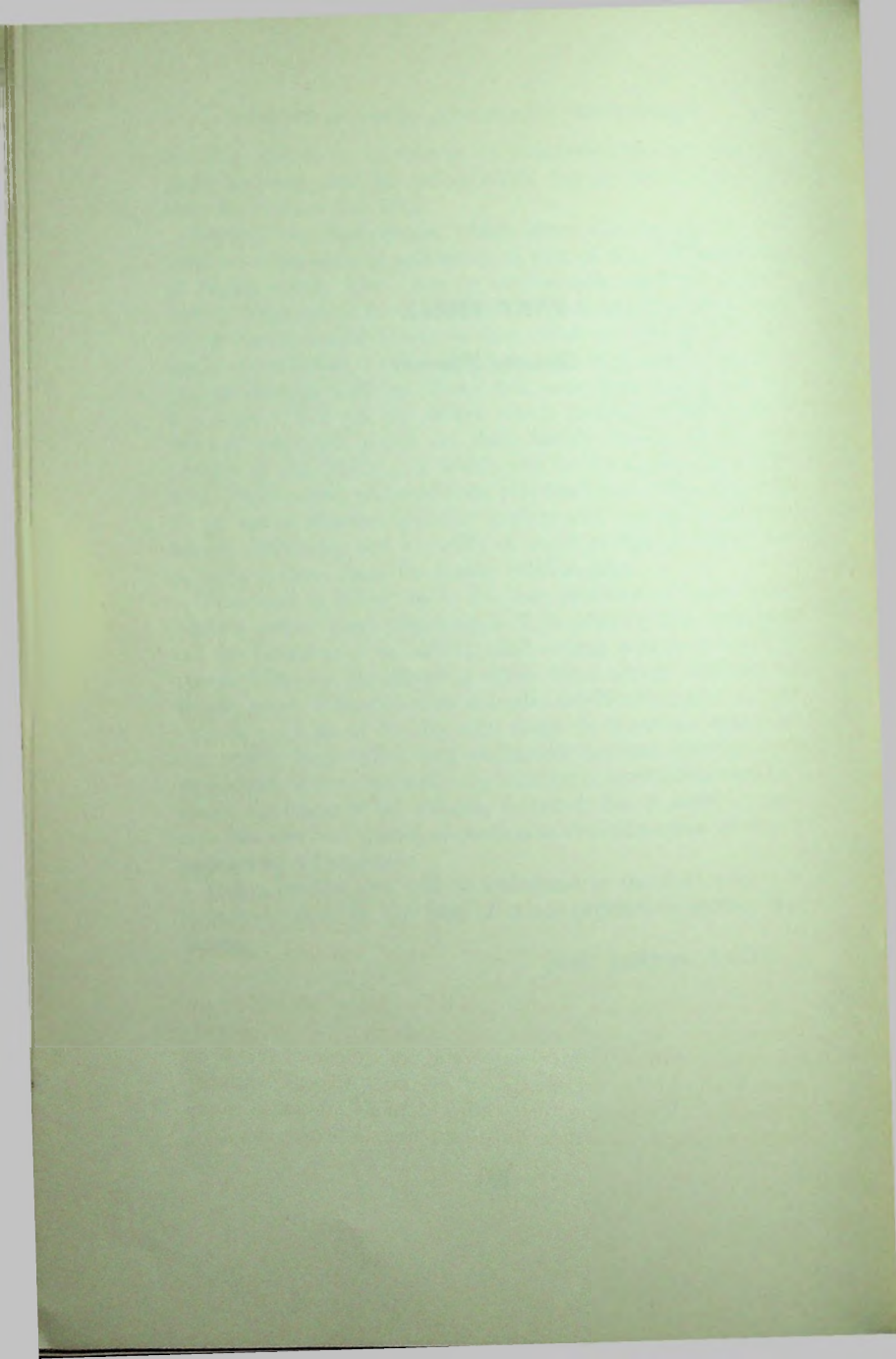
It is a booklet that will be welcomed in the field where it is most needed—in the field of crime prevention among the young.

JOAN LESTOR, L.C.C.



PART THREE

*General Themes*



## COUNCILS ARE NEWS

MAX MADDEN

UNEARTHING facts about enterprises run by local authorities is a trying task. "The only way you could find out what they are doing is to telephone them," was the advice of a spokesman of one local government organisation. More than 1,500 telephone calls? There must be an easier way.

I started by inquiring about the extent, and types, of enterprises organised by authorities. But the difficulties experienced in this turned my investigation into an examination of the news and information services of authorities.

Three questions now present themselves: Why do local authorities shroud their activities in almost total darkness? Why do most of them turn their backs on publicity? Why do those with the imagination to employ public relations and Press personnel make them the "dogs bodies" of the authority.

There are only a handful of such personnel in local government. Many are given flowery titles but have to "double" as mayor's secretary, road safety officer, librarian, and one is even an "organisation and methods officer."

It would be stupid, of course, to suggest that all of the 1,500 local authorities in England and Wales should employ such staff. But surely the large borough authorities, county councils and London boroughs should seriously consider making such appointments.

It is true that the words "public relations officer" retain something of an odour in the nostrils of many people, including well-meaning councillors. Some, of course, have been smooth sharks on the periphery of the "Ad-man empire" enthusiastically lending their rather dubious talents to many far from worthy activities. But this is not the whole story.

The Institute of Public Relations is fully aware of this reputation and "seeks to enhance the standing of public relations practice and of those professionally engaged in it by prescribing standards of practice and conduct and encouraging their strictest observance by members."

This should persuade councillors from turning their backs on them all. Public relations officers—and the other personnel—should not be employed to "sell" a local authority like a soap-flake. Their job is not to urge everyone into believing that a local authority is a shining organisation that does no wrong.

The major job is to let the people—the local residents—*know* what an authority is doing in their name. What the departments are doing, why and when. He is simply a *means* of communication between the council and the people, usually expressed through the Press, radio and television, and, in certain cases, directly with the public.

Where such staff have been appointed the results have been encouraging. The need to do nationally what such staff were doing locally, was the main reason the four local government organisations agreed a year ago to set up a Local Government Information Office, under John Sutcliffe, at Palace Chambers, Bridge Street, London.

It is popularly believed that the establishment of this office was the first thing the four associations had ever commonly agreed upon. It is already judged a success. Its aim is "to promote interest in Local Government" and to publicise the views of the associations.

The office advises the B.B.C. (Mrs. Dale has become a councillor!) about local government affairs. It is administered by a management committee (consisting of representatives of all the associations) and has an annual budget.

As local government grows more complex, its administrative machinery also expands, often masking much of its activities. There is urgent need to release more information about its work. But information is useless unless it is really *newsworthy*—and it is here that skilled staff are needed.

Gathering newsworthy information is the job of a trained journalist. If it is to be done efficiently, and attract competent



people, they must not be burdened with other routine tasks. Informing people about the activities, aims, and policies, of authorities with populations of a 100,000-plus, is a full-time job.

But it does not finish there. There should be greater co-ordination between authorities on information and news services. This will become more necessary as regional television and radio becomes established. Perhaps the best way of dealing with this would be to set up regional news offices, which could handle information from a number of authorities. This would make the service more comprehensive and help relieve individual authorities from handling too many inquiries.

There is also an urgent need for centralisation of information about seaside resorts. A central office should be set up, which could help with information about Britain's major resorts. As foreign travel becomes more popular Britain's holiday attractions must be fully publicised. At the moment the coverage is sporadic and not as effective as it might be. The office, which could be set up in London, would act as a clearing house for information—and become the place where potential visitors, from home and abroad, could easily contact.

It would also be useful if the name of the person involved in this work could be standardised. Information Officer or News Officer come to mind. If this were done inquiries could be handled more quickly than at present.

There is no doubt that many local authority achievements are worth publicising. The number of projects entered for the "Accolade for Enterprise" competitions, organised by the National and Local Government Officers' Association, show this.

N.A.I.G.O.'s members entered projects undertaken by authorities and prizes were awarded for the best. Among those entered in the first competition were a floral hall, with a continental zoo in Rhyl, an experiment with heated pavements in Billingham, a centre for the training and rehabilitation of the tuberculous, a centre for the physically handicapped, and an old people's home built in separate units in Nottinghamshire. The first local authority arts festival in Wales in

Caerphilly; and the conversion of disused gravel workings into a sports stadium at Welwyn Garden City.

More than fifty projects were nominated last year. The first municipal skid-training school at Ealing; a modern laundry service (25 lb. for 4s.) in Tottenham; a film made by Northumberland County Council to encourage industry and tourism to the North-East; and the first municipal workshop for the elderly at Romford.

There were swimming pools and sports stadiums, libraries, the first building in the world heated by the sun, and the appointment of a "Prince Charming" at Middlesbrough General Hospital, who "receives all casualties as they arrive . . . and comforts the patients and those who accompany them and tries to solve their personal problems."

Publicity to such human achievements would help to break down the prevailing belief that authorities are nothing but grey-headed bureaucracies. They are spending a lot of money, much of it coming from the local population. They have a right to know what the authority are doing with it, or planning to do with it.

More council committees should be open to the Press. Legislation has been passed to facilitate this to a large extent, but there are already complaints that this is being neatly circumvented.

Council minutes need to be written in English that can be readily understood, and not in incomprehensible Civil Service prose. This is the reason for many newspapers omitting council affairs or reporting them inaccurately, favourite grumbles from councillors. Summaries of the main items should also be given.

The information or news officers should hold Press conferences with local Press, radio and television representatives. But they should not be held unless there is something of *real* interest. But constant contact should be maintained. This might not tangibly improve an authority's Press coverage, but it should certainly not worsen it.

If authorities make constructive and imaginative approaches to presenting all kinds of news and information it is bound to reflect in a better informed, and more appreciative, local

population. It might drown a few of the all too frequent cries : "Something should be done about that . . ." It might also encourage more than 40 per cent of the electorate to take the bother to vote.

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Max Madden is a journalist on *Tribune*, the weekly newspaper. He was formerly a reporter on a local newspaper and has contested an Essex County Council seat.

## "OPERATIONAL RESEARCH IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT"

By R. A. WARD

(*Royal Institute of Public Administration*, 12s. 6d.)

WITH the growing complexity of modern life, management, whether of private industry, state enterprise, or government, both national and local, has increasingly accepted the need for greater efficiency. To assist in this process recourse is being made to a more incisive method of examining particular problems. The scientists are called in to use their particular skills to arrive, as a result of objective analysis, at the best solutions. The extensive use of statistics and the aid of computers enable the "experts" to advise on the necessary operational improvements.

This short work sets out in a reasonably simple manner an introduction to "Operational Research." Some of the problems dealt with seem rather elementary and it might be taken as an implied criticism of "management" itself that the aid of highly trained scientists has to be invoked on these occasions. Indeed an O. and M. or O.R. report on the "summits of power" might produce a valuable but somewhat embarrassing picture.

While the utilisation of scientific advice by the administrators can be technically progressive, care must be taken that a proper balance be maintained in their social responsibilities. An imposing report, costing say, £5,000, which results in "chasing" the typists and dispensing with three refuse collectors, is an expensive luxury. "Experts" tend to become vested interests for their own multiplication and often high valuation.

With these reservations this book is recommended as useful reading for those interested in the problem of operational efficiency in all fields.

COUNCILLOR A. F. G. COOPER, F.A.C.C.A.



## THE TRADE UNION ANGLE

JOHN HENRY

WHAT useful part do the trade unions play in local government decisions and enterprise, particularly with reference to Labour-controlled authorities?

First of all, if local government, which is concerned with the basic needs of the community (health, welfare, schools, housing, and all that goes with building up the best standards to fulfil our social needs), is to be successful from a good administrative and economic point of view, then it is essential that all councils should be representative of all classes of the community. Fortunately, most Labour-controlled local authorities try to foster this policy.

To my mind, it is important that trade union representation on all councils should, wherever possible, be not only men and women who are paid officials but also those who have been active as branch secretaries or representatives. I would like to see this membership representative of all the varied trades such as engineering, building and industry generally. I feel that this representation would improve the smooth and efficient working of local government. It is regrettable that there is not much opportunity for the ordinary, skilled workman to take his rightful place in local government. In the first place, very few employers will release an employee to attend day-time meetings. Consequently, you will understand the circumstances in which the ordinary working man is prevented from playing his full part in our local government work.

I would like here, to take my own experience. I am pleased to be a Member representing both Lewisham and Deptford on the Greater London Council. When this authority fully

functions next year—as from April 1st, 1965—all members must be prepared to give up two, and perhaps three days per week. That is, if they are to play a full part in the affairs of the Greater London Council.

What is the result? We are left in the main with the professional classes and retired members who can give the necessary time without any great financial sacrifice. That is, compared to that of the ordinary working man.

I would like to say here that as I see it, my role here in this contribution is to try and draw attention to the part trade unionists can and do play in local government, without any disparagement to the professional classes. They are, indeed, an integral part of our society and have a role to play in local government, equally important with that of the trade unionist.

Of course, the problems set out above are mainly due to the fact that members of local authorities are not paid, a point I will leave to some other writers on the subject who, no doubt, can make a good case for payment.

### *Automation and leisure*

The great controversy over leisure is something we must all face up to, with automation playing an important part in our industrial life. Here, the experience of the trade unionist can assist in discussions at local government level on this aspect of modern life. Automation is bound to come, if we are to achieve the economic progress of other nations such as Russia and the U.S.A., and this means that we must have a policy relating to the working conditions that will come about. This will mean a shorter working week, and the question that has to be answered is how to provide useful leisure for our working class.

This problem will, no doubt, be the responsibility of the local authorities, and therefore it can best be answered by the ordinary trades union representatives on local authorities, who have acquired an intimate knowledge of what best suits the ordinary working man. You should not forget that the tastes of the working man in his pursuit of leisure are different from those of the professional classes. There are, of course, economic reasons for this. The professional class are

in receipt of a salary and pension rate much higher than that of the great majority of the working class. I do hope that most people understand that the majority of our working population goes into millions, who get no more than twelve pounds per week.

I would say, therefore, that the trade union members of local government committees who are of the working class, will know what is needed to cater for the pleasure and happiness of the lower-paid sections of the community who, after all, have a right to pursue and take part in healthy leisure and lead and live a full and purposeful life.

In this field of the pursuit of leisure, the trade unions have a practical approach to this problem, where without disparagement of the professional classes of our society, there is a tendency to be carried away with grand theories that lack the practical approach. The practical approach is of great importance here, as theories which gain acceptance from a class who because of its environment are very far removed in their understanding of the problems of a working-class society, may not be of much use. The trade unionist is in a strong position here, as he can express views which are psychologically acceptable to his fellow trade unionists and members of his class.

### *Organisation and methods study*

I would like now to deal with a subject which follows closely on what I have written on the subject of Automation and the Pursuit of Leisure.

Increased efficiency and, at a later stage, automation is bound to come in local government administration. Today in local government and other public utilities the whole emphasis is on Organisation and Methods Work Study.

I write here with some experience, as a member of the Metropolitan Boroughs Organisation and Methods Committee.

As a member of the committee, I have been present at all the discussions on work study which have been put into operation in most London metropolitan boroughs. The object is to bring greater efficiency to the working of local government, in cutting out waste wherever possible, and in the introduction

of bonus schemes for work people engaged in the various manual tasks undertaken by local authorities. I am pleased to report that the introduction of these studies has met with great co-operation from the appropriate trade unions engaged in the local authorities, and has been an all-round success.

I would, however, add a few words of caution here. To enable me to evaluate the worth of Organisation and Methods Study as a whole, it would be helpful if an annual financial report of the total savings to the local authorities could be presented to the committee. This would, I am sure, enable the layman to more fully appreciate the value of O. & M.

Again, I might add here that it would be useful if the O. & M. Study Groups were composed of people independent of, and having no connection with, the local authorities under study. Also, it would be a great step forward if the trade unions and work people's representatives were appointed to the O. & M. Study, so that they were placed in a position where they could follow the study through to its final conclusion. This is surely a better arrangement than having the trade unions such as N.A.L.G.O., N.U.P.E., N.U.G.M.W., T.G.W.U., A.E.U., and the E.T.U. placed in a purely consultative position. With trade union representation on O. & M. Groups, the dangers of redundancy and cut back in the staff could be dealt with at an early stage, and satisfactory arrangements could be arrived at both to the benefit of the employees and the local authorities concerned.

Trade union representation on the local authorities play a very important role here, as they are able to dispel any suspicions that are in work people's minds, about the dangers of redundancy, by seeing to it that their interests are safeguarded and understood. Most work people do not fully trust our capitalist society. They do not believe that they will always have full employment. You will, therefore, realise the difficulty of putting over such schemes, and the importance of skilled trade union co-operation on both sides.

### *Direct labour*

I will now turn to the work of the Direct Labour Departments of local authorities.



Direct Labour is an enterprise in local government which can, if efficiently worked, bring about a major saving to the ratepayers. These savings come about not only through municipal building by direct labour, but by large-scale council house building.

Take, for example, the London County Council's Direct Labour force engaged in new building and in the maintenance and repair of the Council's own housing estates.

The figures of saving due to direct labour being employed by the L.C.C. amount to millions of pounds. Another aspect of direct labour is that it has been able to keep down the costs of building when competing with private enterprise. This is already reflected most favourably as far as the cheap rents the L.C.C. charges its tenants—compared to the rents charged by private landlords, for similar accommodation.

I would recommend every local authority, wherever possible, to introduce direct labour if we are to check private enterprise with their very high costs of building. These high costs bring about inflated rents, beyond the means of most working-class people.

The success of a well-organised labour force depends on having the full co-operation of the trade unions engaged in the building industry where the trade unions can play a useful part in extending these forms of local government enterprise in the field of housing. The building trade worker on a housing committee, for example, has the ability to understand and communicate with his fellow trade unionists in the building trade. This results in his being able to get the best co-operation and efficiency from the members of the direct labour force. He is also in a position to communicate grievances of members of his trade direct to the housing committee and anticipate problems that might arise with, for instance, the introduction of new building methods such as industrialised prefabrication.

### *Summing up*

What I have endeavoured to do in this article is to point out, as a trades unionist, who was actively engaged in the organisation of the trades union movement as far back as the

'thirties, how I feel about the problems of local government.

My trade union history goes back to the strike in the Smithfield Market of 1930, which I had to lead to get trade unionism recognised against great opposition by the employers of the market. During that period, the strike which lasted several weeks was successful, and we got the employers to recognise our union, the Transport and General Workers Union.

Later, when I joined the London Fire Brigade I helped to organise the Auxiliary Fire Service section of the Fire Brigades Union. We had a very close association with the London County Council, and the union played a very fine role in representations to the Home Office before and during the last war, to bring about greater fire fighting efficiency.

This helped keep up the morale of Londoners who suffered so much during the bombing, and yet refused to allow the evil of Hitler and his hirelings in Germany to break them.

My union played a very important part in helping and advising on the 1947 Fire Brigade Act. All credit is due to Chuter Ede, who was Home Secretary at that period, and was responsible for this Act, which made several local authorities have a permanent fire brigade where none existed before the war. I know from this experience how useful my work for the Fire Brigades Union has been to me, in advising my friends on local authorities on matters dealing with fire protection.

In conclusion, I would say definitely that it is my opinion that the trade unionist has a very important part to play in our society and especially in local government, and that though this account is very sketchy I hope I have succeeded in expressing "the trade union angle" on local government decisions and local government enterprise.

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John Henry is a member of the Fire Brigades Union, and serves on both the G.L.C. and the new Lewisham Council.

## THE THIRD WAY IN HOUSING— THE CO-OP WAY

REG SCAIFE

It is quite remarkable how uncomplainingly Labour local authorities throughout the country have accepted their part in the creation of the Tory "property-owning democracy." There has been an apparently undisturbed assumption that those people who do not wish to rent their homes, do wish to shut themselves up in a "castle" they own themselves and use its walls to isolate their problems within their own family.

What do we know of the pressures and motives which lead people to buying a house? What are the dominant factors which persuade them to buy rather than rent from the council? If anyone does try to examine this question, they will have to clear many preconceptions from their minds. What proportion of families do in fact buy more living space than they could rent from the council? How many people buy because they are not qualified for the local housing list by lack of local residence qualifications? How many people buy to escape from exorbitant private rents for accommodation sufficiently adequate for their families to prevent them obtaining any priority on the housing list?

These questions have not been asked or answered as yet because no alternative to renting and individual buying has been evident. However, curiously enough, it is the Tories themselves who have made an alternative available. Six years ago they provided local authorities with the powers to make mortgage loans to co-operative housing associations. These powers have remained almost completely unused.

The powers were virtually overlooked at the time they

were granted, because the main political battle over housing was the fierce one raging over the infamous decontrol of private rents. Nevertheless, even those authorities known to welcome applications from co-operative housing associations, such as Willesden, have had very little response. Are the British not interested in this form of housing, or does its unfamiliarity lead to reluctance to experiment, or is some more practical assistance required to make these associations possible? A final answer to the first two questions can only be given when we can answer "no" to the third one.

### *The Co-operative Housing Association*

Let us first be clear as to the nature of a co-operative housing association. In the past, the Press has concentrated on pioneer groups, born of the desperation created by housing costs and shortage, which can be termed "the do-it-yourself movement writ large." All tribute should be paid to the tenacity, determination and organising powers of these groups of people, but they can hardly offer a substantial contribution to the national housing problem.

The Tory Party has shown most interest in paternal, charitable housing trusts, and schemes of cost renting. This approach, based on the assumption that the tenants are incapable of being responsible for their homes and reminiscent of the nineteenth-century Improved Industrial Dwellings, can have little future in this day and age.

No, the reader must envisage a quite different situation. The housing co-operative of the future will be a group of people who come together to convert an existing building or develop a site to provide each family concerned with adequate housing. They will accept collective responsibility for the mortgage and maintenance of the property but will contract the initial task of building and conversion to a builder. They will undertake a greater proportion of their long-term responsibilities collectively than is true either of the council tenant or the owner occupier and, at the same time, will be seeking to develop a greater measure of amenities and facilities as the direct benefit of this collective association. They will expect their combined purchasing power to provide them with



either parity of amenity with the owner-occupier or, more likely, greater amenity at the same cost.

Now, perhaps, it is possible to identify some of the practical problems which continue to exist despite the side-tracking of the financial and legal caution of the building societies by the empowering of local authorities to provide mortgages. There may be anything from two to an infinite number of families involved. The size of the co-operative is limited at the lower end by the need to make efficient use of the building or site available and at the upper end by the practicability of operation of a comparatively simple and necessarily permissive form of grass-roots democracy.

Within these limits, there are the two problems of bringing together a group of people and negotiating a satisfactory site for them. To many couples, however desperate their need and great their determination, these difficulties must seem insurmountable; and, yet, they are ones which have already been met and overcome by local authorities in the development of public housing. Is there any basic reason why a list of potential participants in housing co-operatives should not be maintained by each council, just as it maintains a list of potential tenants? From the list groups of people could be drawn together on a basis of creating balanced and compatible communities in order to form an association. Equally, is there any reason why land should not be made available to associations in development or re-development areas? Councils can sell already erected council houses to individual tenants, so why not sites to groups of people who would, otherwise, look to the council for rent or for mortgages or, as in the case of many single people, would find no place at all within the context of public assistance to housing?

Once this stage is reached, a number of existing council departments can help to ease the path of the co-operative. A plethora of solicitors, each acting for an individual family, and each unfamiliar with the type of agreement involved, could make chaos of a scheme. On the other hand, the council's legal department could provide a fair, impartial and skilled alternative, which can contribute much to the long-term success of the association.

Similarly, the architect's department, with its experience of large housing developments, could do much to reconcile varied needs and preferences, and, at the same time, provide a greater opportunity for community development and architectural experiment.

These small and medium sized developments could provide employment for the local direct labour scheme in between building larger council estates and provide the association with a more trustworthy builder. Wherever private builders had to be used the legal department would assist with the contracts and the council's building inspectors with the supervision of the work.

At each stage, the budding new community is more vulnerable to the shark and the incompetent than the council or the owner-occupier and the council must recognise that it has the facilities and expertise to assist its new group to a healthy life.

In exchange, the council is providing itself with a new and valuable weapon in the renewal of its area. Particularly in the context of current land and building costs and interest rates, many councils are finding increasing difficulty in maintaining the pace of building which was reached in the late forties and fifties.

At the same time, the penal compensation which has to be found for many refusals of planning permission has weakened still further the ability of councils to mould the development of their counties or boroughs in the interests of their electors.

In such a situation, the council prepared to take the initiative and become the focal point of co-operative housing developments in its area is acquiring a means of enlarging the size, area and social content of those housing schemes it can undertake itself and is also developing a positive alternative, through compulsory purchase for co-operative development, to the negative and costly refusal of planning permission.

At present, the dreary round of seeing costs pull council houses and flats beyond the pockets of the lower income majority on the housing lists is becoming all too familiar.

The co-operative offers no alleviation of this problem. It does offer the family, at present condemned to the frustration and isolation of owner-occupation, the opportunity of obtaining greater amenities, within the context of a more open, more community conscious and responsible society, at much the same cost as they would pay for their cocoon-home of today.

In all fairness, the point of cost must be emphasised. Co-operative housing schemes are not, and cannot be, substitutes for the elimination of the market in land and housing. The basic solution to our housing problems can only be found as part of the comprehensive solution to our current woes. So long as our society continues to tolerate the use of human beings as sources of profit, so long the housing of those human beings will be regarded as another source of profit and the adequacy of one's housing will be determined, not by one's need but by the size of one's bank account.

At the same time, co-operation does offer a temporary palliative both to the community as a whole in controlling its physical environment and to the individual family in obtaining better value for their expenditure on housing. Furthermore, it may be that the Labour Movement itself would gain through a regeneration of that tradition of grass-roots democracy and economic power which the retail co-operative movement first built into it.

In his recent pamphlet, *Social Ownership in the Sixties* (Co-operative Union, 2s.), Bert Oram pointed out that, in social ownership :

"Diversity is a positive asset, not as an end in itself, but as a way of ensuring that each sector of industry is dealt with in the manner most suited to its needs, whether it be State ownership, municipal enterprise, consumer or producer co-operation or a combination of features from some or all of these. This permits the extension of social ownership and control to many industries to which the more familiar patterns of public ownership could not reasonably be applied."

Do we find here the seed of the alternative to the drab, self-centred and self-seeking property-owning democracy of the Tory Utopia?

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## SCIENCE FOR LONDONERS

ELLIS HILLMAN

THE connection between science, planning and metropolitan government has until recently only been imperfectly understood. At best, this connection has been perceived as "through a glass, darkly."

It has to be remembered that metropolitan London grew up not as a result of a planned, purposeful growth serving defined social needs, but as an industrial and commercial sprawl obeying the laws of a *laissez-faire*, Victorian capitalism.

Today, Greater London local government is being pressed into a new mould, following the passage of the 1963 London Government Act. The problems of the London conurbation have had to be restated, only on a scale many times greater than our nineteenth-century forebears could have even remotely envisaged. The challenge implicit in this vast and complex reorganisation and restructuring of London government is great indeed. Science and planning alone can face this challenge.

The Greater London Council and the thirty-two London boroughs have been thrust into a position where with bold imagination and a revolutionary approach to the fast accumulating problems of an ever-expanding Megalopolis—it can begin, at least, to lay down priorities in the different areas of planning, housing, communications and the social services.

It goes without saying that such a radical break with the non-planning attitudes of the past and the inherited prejudices of municipal conservatism is excluded without correspondingly bold measures from a Government which is persuaded of the value and the necessity for marking out areas

where the principles of regional government and planning are fitted into the framework of a national economy over which the overall planning requirements and social priorities have been decisively established.

Whilst science and planning have already thrust their claims for consideration, attention, and even support on the higher reaches of the Government and the Civil Service—it is at the regional and local government level that a massive breakthrough is urgently required, to keep pace with even the limited progress registered in the Whitehall Ministries.

It can be truthfully said that we are “all planners and scientists today,” or, at least, pretenders to the title.

Fortunately, London has been served by the London County Council and the metropolitan boroughs throughout most of the century, and planning and scientific advice has always been available, even if, as in many instances, it was not sought or applied.

The local authorities in the L.C.C. administrative area inherited the Victorian sprawl. They did not invent it, or create it. The valiant, uphill efforts to reverse the non- and anti-planning trends, and the anti-social philosophies governing the nineteenth and early twentieth century *laissez-faire* local authorities in London and elsewhere, coincided with the birth and growth of the Labour movement, and its permeation, Fabian-wise, of the key committees of the metropolitan boroughs and finally, the London County Council—in 1934.

It is with the London County Council's pioneering work in one of these fields, the scientific field, that this survey is principally concerned. A short history is, therefore, worth recapitulating here—telescoped for reasons of space only.

### *The history*

The London County Council was formed in 1889, inheriting from its predecessor, the Metropolitan Board of Works, a small scientific department. In fact, as far back as 1869, the Metropolitan Board of Works appointed a Consulting Chemist. A Chemical and Gas Department was set up under a Mr. T. W. Keates, the Consulting Chemist, which provided

scientific advice for other departments of the Metropolitan Board of Works.

In the earlier, formative years, the Chemical and Gas Department concerned itself almost exclusively with such apparently mundane matters as oil lamps and gas for lighting and cooking, and a little work on general supplies for the Council's other departments. The London County Council took a far-sighted decision right from its inception by appointing a Chief Chemist as the Chief Officer of the Chemical and Gas Department.

The department was little affected by the change-over from the M.B.W. to the newly-formed L.C.C.

This department served Londoners in those distant Victorian days in matters connected with main drainage, the quality of gas and gas mantles, and the supply of safe paraffin for lamps, i.e. paraffin that does not have a low flash point.

In addition, the department supervised quality control of foods and general supplies on a wider scale than in the days of the M.B.W.

As long ago as 1890, the L.C.C. was taking active steps to protect Londoners against low flash point paraffin, which had been responsible for a large number of accidents and even fatalities caused by fire and the explosions of these lamps.

This was some seventy-five years ago, and during the intervening period, the work of serving and protecting Londoners has continued expanding in outlook and scope, as scientific progress has advanced and technology developed.

The Chemical and Gas Department was reformed as the Chemical Branch in 1912, when the bulk of its work was merged in the then rapidly developing Public Health Department.

By 1954 the field of the Chemical Branch had so widened, and with the dividing lines between the many branches of science becoming increasingly indistinct as the various sciences rapidly digested new readily available knowledge, that it became evident that no one science such as chemistry could deal with all the everyday, practical problems thrown up by the daily life of the large "London family" cared for by the Council.



It was, therefore, decided to rename the Chemical Branch the Scientific Branch in line with the widening of its endeavours.

Since 1954 the amount of work has doubled and arrangements have been made since 1961 for the services of the Scientific Branch to be made available to the metropolitan borough councils.

This important step in co-operation between the L.C.C. and the metropolitan borough councils took place as the direct result of a motion passed in March 1961 at a meeting of the Council which provided "That subject to review by March 31st, 1962, the services of the Scientific Branch of the Public Health Department be made available to the metropolitan borough councils at a charge of £1 for investigations requiring laboratory work, information from existing laboratories being provided free of charge."

This arrangement was confirmed by the 1962 General Powers Act, and has been in successful operation ever since.

In addition, negotiations were concluded with two of the London boroughs (Poplar and Bethnal Green) following the retirement of their Public Analyst, for the food and drugs analysis work to be transferred to the laboratories of the Council. A Public Analyst has been appointed to undertake these duties, together with the work on food and drug purchases by the Council on which several millions of pounds are spent annually. This then is the current state of expansion and development that has been reached by the Scientific Branch, and it is convenient at this point to take a closer look at the range of work undertaken and advice provided for the Council and its departments.

### *The range of advice*

Today, most of the principal committees of the Council, e.g. Housing, Town Planning, Rivers and Drainage, Fire Brigade, Supplies and Health are advised by the Scientific Branch.

Dr. S. G. Burgess, the present indefatigable Scientific Adviser to the Council, is responsible for the preparation of



the informative annual reports detailing the activities of the branch. Available to the public at the price of 1s. 3d., these reports effectively establish the pivotal importance of scientific advice to a county authority as large and complex as the London County Council.

The Scientific Branch deals with such varied matters as paints, building materials, stores, air pollution, laundries, detergency, swimming baths, boiler plants, corrosion, sewage treatment, corrosion and trade effluents—to take but a few specialised fields bound up with the efficient running of the Council's departments.

This far-ranging scientific advice is made possible by large well-equipped laboratories and well-qualified staff. Substantial financial saving and streamlining of services have resulted from this policy of centralisation of scientific advice under one branch instead of being scattered throughout the departments under different heads.

This work protects the Londoner as a "municipal consumer." The branch thus acts as a consumer protection organisation. It ensures that the well-being of the Londoner is protected, as well as his pocket. The quality of materials and supplies supplied to the various departments of the Council is under constant review, and new materials are brought into active service, after their efficiency has been tested and proven.

### *The Londoner's well-being*

On the public protection side, reference has to be made to a number of activities on which the Scientific Branch is engaged.

The branch is responsible, for instance, for the building materials used by the Council in its construction work. It has to examine new products, assess their value, lasting properties and financial aspects in use. It has also to check contractor's work—often very necessary regrettably—and the materials used.

Foodstuffs in general have also to be examined. Competitive tenders received have to be assessed, and deliveries have to be checked for value and purity.

School meals have also to be examined for adequate nutritional standard; vitamins, calcium content, and the various sources of these accessory products have to be compared.

Environmental radioactivity is measured at the Council's laboratories and the extent of any external additions to radioactive matter in the atmosphere due to weapon trials and nuclear reactors is measured. This is of course a vital matter, and of public interest and concern.

The public too, has to be protected from the poisonous atmosphere that occasionally accumulates in the Blackwall and Rotherhithe tunnels. More than 1,000 vehicles per hour pass through these tunnels during much of the day, and weekly tests have to be made on the atmospheric conditions. Routine requirements are made of the carbon monoxide content from exhaust fumes, black suspended matter, temperature and humidity of the air. Occasional tests are also made for the minor pollutants such as lead, aldehyde and nitrogen oxides.

Fire precautions and investigations also fall within the province of the Scientific Branch. Precautions necessary with individual materials and plant have to be assessed, and the most efficient methods for extinguishing the fire of a chemical or a fire have to be ascertained. Fires have to be investigated, when advice is required, and the causes have to be established; reports on extinguishers have to be compiled and built-in installations have to be checked.

The biological problems of insect pests and fungal attacks have also to be tackled. The work consists of identification of pests and suggestion as to remedial measures. These attacks can be very costly, and speed is as essential as accurate diagnosis.

In the new world of plastics, particularly in the domestic field—new products and their application have to be tested. To save money, identification of types is essential, if difficult.

In the case of metals, the correct use of metals is very important to avoid costly corrosion and expensive replacement. This subject is closely linked with protection by paint.

Experience has shown that metal failures are usually expensive to remedy.

Another important aspect of amenity for the public that has received much attention as a result of such organisations as the Noise Abatement Society—is the assessment and analysis of noise and vibration. The pioneer work undertaken by the London Noise Survey has underlined the effects of traffic and variations in traffic conditions, and the shape and height of buildings in determining degree of "noise." The exact data that have been obtained provide the information required to protect the public from unpleasant industrial noise and vibration.

The branch is also responsible for sewage treatment. The control of the pollution of the River Thames at minimum cost, and the use of cheap power from sludge digestion—these, too, come within the wide terms of reference of the branch.

These myriad activities are, of course, only briefly referred to here in note form.

#### *Public protection—the Londoner as a ratepayer*

The Scientific Branch has also another protective function. It protects the Londoner as a ratepayer, and the quality of materials and foodstuffs used in the Council's considerable endeavours is under constant survey and review.

Some detailed examples of money savings are given below to indicate their extent and range.

##### *(1) Paint*

Before 1939 houses were painted externally every three years, and internally, an approximately five-year programme was in operation. Paint is now assessed on a quality basis and since only first-class products are used the programme is now: externally six-seven years, internally ten-twelve years, and the paint is now selected to be of a quality which will last this period of time.

This development halves the cost of a given amount of painting, as this is the cost of paint and cost of labour to apply it, which is at least four times the paint cost.

The calculation of the saving is difficult to compute,

because there is very much more to paint today than before the war. On a conservative figure this would not be less than £200,000 per year at the present time. This alone pays for the whole branch.

Without the paint "know-how" which determines whether a paint is satisfactory or not, the Council would be forced to buy the cheapest paint offered, and the painting bill would either increase out of all proportion, or property would become dilapidated with wood perishing needing costly replacement.

## (2) *Laundries*

The process used in the Council's laundries have been reorganised using mains water and synthetic detergents. Here the cost of heating the water used and the cost of chemicals was decreased. In addition, less damage was done to the fabric—prolonging its useful "life"—and output was increased overall. Detailed experiments on nine of the fourteen laundries, involving the washing of over 6,000,000 articles a year, showed that an annual saving of some £30,000 a year could be achieved, provided that scientific control was maintained.

## (3) *Detergents*

Domestic detergents must be blended to be a compromise for various purposes, for example, with washing clothes and washing dirty dishes. By studying the subject and conducting research into the requirements for specific jobs, formulations were evolved which are put out to tender. This results in a much cheaper price per ton for a better article and some £23,000 are saved each year. Research into the methods used and new materials available continues to keep abreast of developments in this industry. Where a manufacturer's article is suitable for a special purpose at a cost where it would not pay to put to tender a formulation then this is recommended after thorough test.

## (4) *Swimming baths*

Swimming is only a healthy occupation if the water is free



from harmful bacteria. In London the baths under the control of the Council are maintained so that the water is kept up to drinking water standard. Fundamental research work on this subject has been published by the Scientific Branch, and the old methods of treatment have been replaced by new, with not only an improvement in bathing conditions, but an annual saving of money in water, fuel and labour of some £7,000.

#### (5) *Steam boilers*

Any large local authority has a variety of steam and hot water boilers which will, unless the water used is treated, form scale and waste fuel.

Some twenty plants are controlled by the Scientific Branch and £4,000 a year are saved in fuel alone.

The treatment is checked at regular intervals, and as a result the boilers do not have to be laid off for descaling.

In collaboration with the chief engineer, trade effluents are assessed for charge proportionately to the difficulty of treating them satisfactorily at the treatment works. Whilst this encourages the manufacturer to be careful, to avoid discharging wastes which will cost him money, considering the experience of other authorities, the Council will receive it is estimated by the method of assessment, some half a million pounds. In addition, examination in the laboratory of the gas works effluents from Beckton enables appropriate charges to be made for their reception.

These are just some examples where the savings can be approximately calculated. There are, of course, other numerous items which obviously save money but cannot be assessed accurately. For example, the development of floor seals avoiding hand floor polishing; claims on contractors; cutlery cleaning solutions instead of individual hand cleaning; the use of plastic instead of wood and metal; and the reduction of maintenance by using approved and tested building and construction materials.

#### *The immediate future*

During the transitional period April 9th, 1964–March 31st,

1965, the London County Council and the Greater London Council function side by side. The L.C.C. is preparing to divest itself of certain functions such as health and welfare, which will go to the new London boroughs, whilst other powers such as refuse disposal are eventually to be brought under the jurisdiction of the G.L.C.

What then will be the role of scientific advice in Greater London?

It is transparent that the anomalous situation where the Scientific Branch functioned as a sub-department, in effect, of the Public Health Department—is no longer tenable, if only for the reason that the Public Health Services are being transferred to the boroughs.

Under which wing of the Greater London Council department structure then, can the Scientific Branch sensibly be attached?

There appears to be an overwhelming case for the Scientific Branch being placed in a central advisory position at the hub of the Council's activities—i.e. under the Clerk of the Council's department.

The London Government Act, in fact, envisages an Intelligence Department on these terms :

“The Greater London Council shall establish an organisation for the purpose of conducting, or assisting in the conducting of, investigations into, and the collection of information relating to, any matters concerning Greater London or any part thereof and making, or assisting in the making of, arrangements whereby any such information is made available to any authorities concerned with local government, Greater London, any Government department or the public . . .” [London Government Act, 1963, Section 71.].

This Intelligence Department working together with the Scientific Branch would then be centrally positioned to provide the detailed advice on all aspects of the Council's activities through the Clerk of the Council.

Again, the General Purposes Committee of the G.L.C. could set up a Special Scientific and Intelligence Committee

to inform, advise and prepare new projects for the Council's consideration.

The present arrangements where the L.C.C.'s advice is available to the metropolitan boroughs should be incorporated in a wider service, where the G.L.C.'s Science and Intelligence would be made available to the London boroughs. This is an important but simple step in the direction of a Regional Scientific Advisory Service covering the Home Counties and South-East England.

It might be usefully added here that there is no logical objection to the widening of the practice where the food and drugs analysis carried out on a part-time basis either by the Boroughs or the adjoining counties, should not be undertaken at the projected Regional Scientific Laboratories. These then are the administrative and structural changes required in the immediate months ahead to cope with the scientific advice necessary for Greater London. But what of the long-term view?

### *The longer view*

In conclusion it is perhaps only right that scientific advice should be considered in the context of the Greater London complex of A.D. 2000, as well as the immediate problems of the transition 1964-65.

It is of the utmost importance that the scientific units of this Council should be in constant contact with the research organisations in this country and abroad. Not only by this means can the results be quickly applied but long-term practical problems can be presented to such organisations when appropriate.

It is but a matter of time before automation and operational research (defined as "a scientific method of providing executive departments with a quantitative basis for decisions regarding the operations under their control") become a dominant feature of the individual and commercial life of this country. It is not only the basic industries of agriculture and mining which have made advances in the study and application of automation. The food and drink industry, too, is making widespread use of automation in plants for the

preparation, preservation, cooking, packaging and coding of its products.

Local government in general and London government in particular will have to quickly adjust itself to this new situation. Here again, there is absolutely no reason for local government or London regional government to lag behind either the nationalised industries or private industry in these fields. On the contrary, a Scientific and Intelligence Advisory Service could well pioneer the automation of local administration, and simplify the clerical and bureaucratic machinery required to serve an authority as large as Greater London.

London 2000 may well be preoccupied with a new range of problems, the nature of which is beyond our immediate understanding.

A few, however, do suggest themselves. Problems which will require the diligent advice of the A.D. 2000 Scientific and Intelligence Unit.

There will, of course, be the problem of the vast industrial prefabrication revolution in housing and the new materials, besides the steel, wood, plastics and glass which will have to be tested and examined. Here with a decisive extension of the public sector of land and housing, with the building of new towns outside the Green Belt area, and the expansion of existing towns—the building and site investigation research of the laboratories and testing stations will be magnified out of all proportion to the scales accepted today. The seemingly intractable problems of traffic congestion, too, will require the careful attention of the Greater London Traffic Surveys of A.D. 2000. The London Traffic Survey now in current preparation is but a first, hesitant step in the direction of the planning and scientific control of what is now being termed the London Motopolis.

Then again there are the possible dangers to health from food additives, colouring matter, processed or unprocessed meat, the fluoridation of water, pesticides, fungicides, which are very much in the public mind at the moment thanks to the work of Rachel Carson and Ruth Harrison. Only recently the National Association for Health has launched a campaign to



canalise public anxiety in a practical way by collecting evidence of harm arising from exposure to chemicals, to organise publicity, to draw attention to the known hazards, and to press for legislative action on measures like the labelling of foodstuffs to protect the consumer. And none too soon! Even animal foods such as cat and dog food require examination for nutritive value and polluting substances, not only to protect animals from infection, but also human beings.

Here too in this field it seems scientific and medical advice will be continually sought by London 2000.

Air pollution in all its forms—including environmental radioactivity—will also have to be checked in the years ahead. Indeed research should be encouraged on electric traction, which would reduce, indeed remove, air pollution by vehicles and cut down on traffic noise.

And finally, there is scope for research into the medical and psychological effect of noise and vibration. Much of the statistical data has already been assembled by the London Noise Survey, and it is only right that this information be used for the investigation of these “noise nuisance” problems inevitable with the growth of London. Already presbycusis, the medical term for the loss of sensitivity of the ear which occurs naturally with increasing age, is a cause of some concern.

Then there is the problem of the characteristic double boom of supersonic air jets flying over closely populated areas, which has already led to debate in the House of Commons. It was said that if everyone in Britain made one Concord flight every week, and the boom was heard by an average of 5,000,000 people, everyone would have to listen to 50,000 booms a year, or one every four minutes of the day. And after the supersonic aircraft will come the rockets and the space-ships.

This together with the advent of low flying jet aircraft and helicopters will probably occupy a considerable part of the time of the physics and acoustics division of the scientific service outlined above. More research, too, is required into the possible dangers latent in ultrasonic and subsonic vibra-

tions outside the normal audible range. Here, again, there is work to be done.

These then are some of the problems of scientific control of the future.

With dynamic leadership, science and intelligence can make a massive contribution to a London 2000, where planning, housing, communications and the social services have established their rights and their responsibilities.

It is up to the Greater London Council, the London Boroughs and the Greater Londoner to lay the firm foundations for the London 2000, the capital city and county of a New Britain.

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Ellis Hillman is a geologist. He is also Local Government Correspondent for *Tribune*, and represents Hackney on the L.C.C. and G.L.C.

"The question whether municipal trading is sound in principle cannot be settled by the figures of this or that adventure in it, anymore than the soundness of banking or insurance can be settled by the figures of this or that big dividend or disastrous liquidation. Besides, the balance sheet of a city's welfare cannot be stated in figures. Counters of a much more spiritual kind are needed, and some imagination and conscience to add them up, as well."

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